Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School

19 West End Road, Old Costessey, Norwich. NR8 5AG

Part of the St. John the Baptist Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

We try to follow Jesus by loving each other and caring for God's world.
Wisdom, Love, Might, Let there be Light!

Date published:	January 2025
Next review due:	January 2026

School Mission Statement:

We try to follow Jesus by loving each other and caring for God's world.

School Motto:

"Wisdom, Love, Might, Let there be Light!"

We aim to make the children who attend St Augustine's feel cared for and secure in surroundings where Catholic values are practised, and where their gifts and abilities are recognised and developed in an atmosphere of respect and friendship.

In planning the curriculum we attend to the development of the whole child: the physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual."

St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment.

Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance from the Department for Education which sets out what is expected of organisations and individuals to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

1. Statement of Intent

1.1 SJB Trust EYFS Vision Statement

In the early years in the SJB Trust we want children united in God's love to become happy, confident, well rounded individuals with a love for learning. Our children are provided with a safe and stimulating environment that fosters independence, where they are enabled to learn through play, to explore and express their own ideas knowing that they are valued. We are committed to providing the best possible start to their school life, nurturing positive attitudes, teaching them skills and giving them experiences which will ensure their well-being and success both now and in the future.

'*To think, to feel, to do*' - Pope Francis

1.2 Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2024 DfE statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). EYFS Framework

The EYFS aims to provide:

- **Quality and consistency** in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- **A secure foundation** through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned 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.

1.3 Aims in our school

We will review our practice against the *Seven Key Features of Effective Practice (*from Development Matters):

- The best for every child
- High quality care
- Quality top level curriculum
- Research led pedagogy that responds to how children learn best
- Effective and useful assessment procedures
- Developing the children's executive function and self-regulation skills
- Working in partnership with parents.

Our Early Years settings will provide quality provision, teaching and learning, shaped by the overarching Principles in Early Years.

2. Implementation

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is based on four important principles that should shape practice in early year's settings. The following statements reflect how St Augustine's support these principles.

2.1 Unique Child

1. Characteristics of Effective Learning are considered and encouraged in the development of our children. Children are leaders of their own learning.
2. Planning demonstrates that children's interests and experiences are central to their learning and development. Pre-planned topics and themes are used infrequently, so that each cohort's motivations are at the heart of our provision.

Planning for Continuous Provision			
Unique child **WHAT**	Learning and Development **WHY**	Enabling Environment **HOW**	Positive Relationships **HOW**
What are the child's interests? What would motivate this child? What would give high levels of involvement?	What are the next steps and objectives? What are the skills to be modelled?	How are we going to provide opportunities for learning? What are the enhancements?	What is the adult role? What vocab should we promote? Does it require interactions or non-participating observations?

3. Leuven scales are used to assess the well-being and involvement of any children we are concerned about. Leuven Well-being and Involvement Scales
4. Termly pupil progress records show how we are recognising and addressing gaps and barriers to learning.

2.2 Positive relationships, partnership with parents/carers and the wider community

1. Staff are appropriately trained and are aware of child development and the importance of quality interactions.
2. There is regular communication with parents and carers through newsletters, Tapestry or learning cafes and opportunities for parents to share information.
3. We support parents to help their children at home and offer extra support to those families who need it.
4. We have a transition plan that supports children and their families both starting at our school and moving into KS1. See 2.6 Transition
5. We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by inviting members of the community into our setting.

2.3 Enabling Environments

1. How we respond to the children's current interests and motivations, is visible in our environments.
2. Resources are provided for children to choose from, to develop particular skills, rather than closed activities. The continuous provision allows the children the opportunity to practise the skills taught, while engaged in open-ended play.
3. The environment, inside and out, allows all staff to observe children embedding that week's objectives, during their play.
4. The environment has distinct zones including quiet areas and messy areas, but resources are not used exclusively in these areas.
5. Resources such as mark making tools, ten frames and number lines are accessible throughout the environment, not just in maths areas or a writing table.
6. There are opportunities for extended periods of play without interruptions (such as assemblies and outdoor playtimes).
7. The environment is uncluttered, organised, neutral and calm, which supports a sense of comfort, safety, community and wellbeing. Children are able to tidy and organise resources independently.
8. Displays are purposeful and do not create lots of extra work. They show a process or a journey, not lots of similar products. They reflect what is going on in the classroom and can be quickly updated.

2.4 EYFS Curriculum - Learning and Development

1. Play is at the heart of our practice. It is how children learn and make sense of the world. It is the most motivating and memorable way to learn.
2. We have a clear cycle of assess, plan, observe, that provides a responsive and reflective process.
3. The planning is open ended and flexible, focussing on skills rather than activities.
4. Vocabulary development is at the forefront of our planning and is taught explicitly.
5. All children have next steps to ensure individual progress which are taken into their play.6. High quality observations are carried out using the SHARE acronym. See *Appendix 1*
6. The learning journey and inspirations for learning are documented so that the children can follow them, in floor books.
7. A balance of play, modelling and adult directed learning approaches is evident.
8. We have a top-level curriculum of everything we want the children to learn over the year. It is flexible and takes into account that learning is not linear - It reflects the cohort's starting points, previous experiences, interests and how it will lead into KS1. Half-term plans taken from the top-level curriculum reflect on the children's progress and needs.
9. High quality interactions are always the aim and staff use the ShREC approach to encourage back and forth conversations. See Appendix 2

Our curriculum is aligned with the Areas of Learning & Development stated in the EYFS Statutory Framework (DfE 2021).

EYFS Prime Areas of Learning
Communication and Language
▪ Listening, attention & understanding
▪ Speaking
Personal, Social and Emotional Development
▪ Self-regulation
▪ Managing self
▪ Building relationships
Physical Development
▪ Gross motor skills
▪ Fine motor skills

EYFS Specific Areas of Learning
Literacy
▪ Comprehension
▪ Word reading
▪ Writing
Mathematics
▪ Number
▪ Numerical patters
Understanding the World
▪ Past and present
▪ People, culture and communities
▪ The natural world
Expressive Arts and Design
▪ Creating with materials
▪ Being Imaginative and expressive

2.5 Reading & Phonics

In EYFS, we want our children to develop a love for reading. Therefore, reading is an important key feature in our learning environment and daily practice, especially through reading aloud and telling stories and rhymes.

Good early reading sets the foundation for later success. Being a competent reader also supports children in accessing learning across the whole curriculum. 'The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go' - Dr Seuss. So, we promote and encourage a love of reading, which enriches children's vocabulary and increases their general knowledge and understanding of the world. We use rich books/text (stories, poems/rhymes and non-fiction) to broaden the children's exposure.

We use Phonics Bug as our DfE validated systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme, to teach phonemes and our reading scheme (also Phonics Bug) is phonetically aligned to this, enabling our children to practise and develop the ability to segment and blend phoneme/grapheme sounds independently.

2.6 Transition

Transitions are carefully planned to ensure continuity of learning. We acknowledge each child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with them, including other settings.

Nursery

Transition into Nursery begins with parents and children being invited for 'stay and play' afternoons where they can meet Nursery staff and get to know the setting. Parents are able to talk to the Nursery staff, outlining how Nursery works and answering questions parents may have. During the 'stay and play' sessions, important information is gathered from parents about their child that will help Nursery staff ensure a smooth transition in September.

In the first week of September the Nursery Teacher and another member of Nursery staff conduct home visits to meet parents and their child in their home environment and re-establish links before the child begins Nursery.

In the second week, children with siblings at St Augustine's and or the oldest children begin Nursery for mornings only. Children are then admitted in age order over the next week or so, again for mornings only. By the end of the third week (depending on class size) all children will have started Nursery. During their second week at Nursery those that are entitled to 30 hours funding or who pay fees can stay all day.

Reception
Transition begins in the summer term, before the children start school. There is an information meeting for parents, visits to preschool settings or homes, teddy bears picnic for families and 'stay and play' sessions to choose from.

In September, children are admitted to school, as follows:

- First three days, non St Augustine's nursery children attend mornings.
- Day four, school nursery children who have siblings at the school.
- Day five, the remaining school nursery children begin.
- The next full week at school, children stay all day.

Children may attend part time, if teachers and parents are in agreement and feel it is in the best interests of the child.

Year 1
During the summer term, time will be allocated to prepare the children for the more formal approach in Year 1, where there is less free flow and individual choice of activities. The activities are still very practical and play based and will be adjusted to the needs and interests of the children. Year 1 staff spend time in Reception, reading stories or playing and the children spend time in the KS1 classrooms, to familiarise themselves with the new environments.

3. Impact

3.1 Assessment

1. The starting point is the child (not a tick list).
2. Assessments should always be useful, significant moments and not take adults away from children. They should be taken from the quality observations and everyday routines and interactions. See *Appendix 3.*
3. Our assessments help us to notice what the children know, what they need to know, but should not involve lots of data and evidence. Paperwork is kept to a minimum.
4. Online tracking such as Pupil Asset should only be used at the end of the Reception year.
5. Termly Pupil Progress Records are used to plan interventions and any changes to our practice, environment and adult roles. It allows us to track any children who are not on target.
6. Evidence is helpful but does not take priority over adult interactions.
7. Simple marking and feedback strategies will begin in Reception, when appropriate, preparing our children for KS1. See *Appendix 4.*

How our assessments will be used:

- Reporting to parents
- Transition between settings and classes
- To inform the EYFSP
- To inform our planning
- To identify any barriers to learning and children who need additional support
- To identify children's interest and motivations
- To analyse the impact of our environment and provision.

Impact is also evident through our successful transitions into Year 1. EYFS staff have a good understanding of how ELG's link to the National Curriculum, and through our planning and delivery across the key areas – both core and foundation - children leave the EYFS stage with the skills, knowledge and confidence to continue their learning journey in KS1.

3.2 Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers and support staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head Teacher, Assistant Head teacher and EYFS Phase Leader will carry out regular monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head Teacher, EYFS Lead and the Governing Body.

Links with other policies

This policy links with the following policies and procedures:

- Teaching & Learning policy
- SEND policy and information report
- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Marking and Feedback policy.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Quality observations

- ➔ Observations need to be **factual, descriptive, significant** and **holistic**.
- ➔ They tune in to what the child is able to do.
- ➔ They avoid judgement and labelling.

Have a holistic approach:

- Incorporate many aspects of a child's development and learning. E.g. The child's feelings, thoughts, attitudes and dispositions.
- Focus on the Characteristics of Effective Learning.
- Process oriented rather than product focussed.

Three reflective questions:

1. What have I observed?
2. Why was it important?
3. How has it improved my knowledge of myself or the child?

SHARE

The **Spark**- What started the moment?

What **Happened**? - Describe the moment, and what went on.

The **Assessment**- What is your assessment of the meaning behind what happened?

The **Response**- What did you do to extend or scaffold the moment?

The **End** Result- What happened after your response?

Appendix 2- Quality interactions

The ShREC approach

- **Sh**: Share attention – be at the child's level. Pay close attention to what they are focused on.
- **R**: Respond – follow the child's lead. Respond to their non-verbal and verbal communication. You could make a brief comment on what they can see, hear or feel.
- **E**: Expand – repeat what the child says and build on it by adding more words to turn it into a sentence.
- **C**: Conversation – have extended back and forth interactions. Give children time to listen, process and reply.

Appendix 3 - Types of observations

Participant observations

- When the adult is involved in play with children
- When the adult is involved in planned practitioner led activities

Spontaneous Observations

- When you notice something significant that you are not involved in

Conversations with children

- Informal conversations and discussions

Recording

- Photos or videos of children carrying out a particular activity or involved in play alongside annotated notes describing the learning process- Tapestry or Learning Journals

Samples

- Drawings, independent emergent writing, photos of models, art work

Planned observations

- Where the observer deliberately stands back to observe and does not become involved.

Appendix 4 - Feedback

Reception in the Moment Feedback

We use the following symbols in the writing and drawing club books, for adult reference.



Independent



S for Support and what was supported

We use the following symbols *with* the children and display them in class and in writing and drawing club books.



Listen for the sounds



Finger spaces

.

Full stop