

St Josephs Preschool

Our Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy

The purpose of this policy is to identify how children learn and clarify how we at St Josephs Preschool intend to support children's learning and development, providing inclusive and a leaning rich environment.

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Our Vision

At St Joseph's Preschool our vision is to offer a safe, happy place where everyone is known and valued, and where differing needs are acknowledged, accepted and met.

We will provide stimulating, motivating and challenging activities that will engage children and help them to become independent, develop curiosity and develop respect for themselves and others in the environment.

Our Values

- We value working in partnership with our parents and families to support children's development.
- We value all diverse cultures and understand and recognise that children have different prior experiences and knowledge which they bring to the session. We build upon this to develop positive learning and attitudes.
- We value, respect and place emphasis on good manners, respecting everybody and the world around us.
- We are proud to uphold British values and our commitment is embedded throughout our teaching and learning policies.
- We value and recognise that our practitioners are our most valuable resources. They are committed to all children to support their learning and development which will benefit them now and throughout their future education.

Our Ethos

- Put children first
- Realise the potential of every child and meet their needs
- Work in partnership with families
- Work in partnership with other professional agencies
- Be a team
- Recognise and be proud of what we achieve

Our Intent

At St Joseph's we believe that our children deserve the best start in their Early Years education. We are committed to make our children the centre of the preschool and put children first to support their continuous growth and development. We provide a stimulating, motivating and exciting environment that will encourage their learning and development through adult and child-initiated activities.

We support children to develop their confidence and independence with a have a go attitude at new and challenging experiences through trial and error. We also encourage children to ask for support when needed, develop social skills and to make respectful relationships with others. We want all our children to be given opportunities to reach their full potential.

We will provide opportunities for our children to:

- Explore, learn, enjoy and practise their new skills
- Develop a "have a go" attitude, try new challenges and take risks in their play
- Develop confidence to understand their ability to achieve
- Use what they already know and to build and grow to further their learning and development for future life
- Provide environments both indoors and outdoors for active learning.

Through these opportunities we want our children to:

- Be happy, active, confident and curious learners with a positive attitude to learning
- Feel part of our community, to be included and valued

We will:

- Follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework – and use our curriculum in accordance with the education programmes.
- Have highly qualified staff who will support and implement learning opportunities
- Maintain a resource-rich environment
- Provide opportunities that are adult and child-led
- Value, respect and include the crucial role of parents and carers in their child's learning journey

At St Joseph's Preschool we are facilitators and can adapt and take into account current events both externally and in children's lives.

Our Implementation

At St Joseph's Preschool children learn through play, exploring and being active. Adults follow child initiated interests in the setting. We also offer and implement adult-led activities to build upon what they already know to support their future development and learning and for them to make positive steps to move forward.

British Values are embedded throughout the curriculum of St Joseph's Preschool. We pride ourselves on teaching our children the importance of British Values:

- **Rule of Law**
- **Individual Liberty**
- **Democracy**
- **Mutual tolerance and respect**

We recognise that some play can be adapted and we need to allow and give children the opportunity to use their imagination and creativity. We use a variety strategy such as loose parts play, where children can use resources to enhance their imaginative play and support their creative thinking. This play also supports their communication and language and will provide opportunities to enhance their language skills and to express their own ideas through play.

Practitioners use this area of learning to support and challenge children's thinking in all areas of learning.

We also provide a constant availability of resources for children in areas to support their learning and development and make sure that we are meeting the requirements of the education programmes that are set out in the EYFS.

We use the non-statutory guidance of Birth to Five (2021) and deliver education programmes from the Early Years Foundation stage through the seven areas of learning.

The 3 prime areas:

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

The specific areas of learning are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive Art and design.

The seven areas of learning are delivered through a careful and appropriate balance of child-initiated and adult – led learning.

Also embedded in the EYFS, each child learns and develops differently. We recognise this and can adjust our pedagogy and environment to support the characteristic of effective learning. These are:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience, and 'have a go'
- Activate learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievement
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

We work closely with parents to ensure that children have the best possible start at preschool and throughout their time with us. We work together to develop and complete 2-year-old checks, to gain knowledge about a child's interests and to support future learning and development. We recognise that it is important for key workers and families to develop a good relationship.

St Joseph's Preschool recognises that all children learn differently and we differentiate our curriculum to meet the needs of all children to enable progression and building upon their prior learning. We work with all parents and other professionals if required, to support the learning and development of our children who require extra support to make sure that no child is left behind.

We maintain high standards of quality teaching. We invest in our staff by providing high quality Continued Professional Development (CPD) to match the current needs of the staff and children. Practitioners at St Joseph's Preschool create an environment to meet the skill levels of our children and use their own teacher assessments and gap analysis to inform their planning and provide a quality provision.

At St Joseph's Preschool we want to evolve our professional practice and keep our practice up to date. This is done through training and working alongside each other, with peer observations, key work supervisions and appraisals.

Impact

St Joseph's Preschool recognises that the EYFS is a large part of preparing children to be school ready when they leave our setting. However, it also gives the children the very best start in life generally. Practitioners support all children and give them every opportunity to fulfil their own personal best, reaching their optimum potential in every area of learning and personal targets. Having a key person allocated to every child to build relationships and to identify gaps in their development, through assessments, observations and working together with parents and other professionals helps every child to thrive and achieve their personal goals.

We recognise that language and communication are vital in all areas of a child's development. We welcome children from culturally diverse backgrounds and many of our children are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language (EAL). Communication and language development are therefore a consistent focus enhanced by preschool having the status of an Ekklan Communication Friendly Setting.

Characteristics of effective learning.

These are part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and set out the ways in which children learn.

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.

Preschool's environment and highly experienced practitioners, ensures children are given the opportunities to implement the characteristics of learning into their play

Disadvantaged children statement

St Joseph's preschool recognise that some children may be considered at a disadvantage to their peers.

There are many varied reasons for this, it may include

- Lack of parental involvement in the child
- Lack of parental engagement with the setting
- Economic deprivation
- Illness within the family
- Developmental difficulties

The staff and trustees at St Joseph's preschool have the skills to recognise and support children and their families if concerns are raised. We are aware of and can signpost to the appropriate agencies. This does not take the place of our statutory safeguarding and wellbeing responsibilities.

Assessments

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of teaching, learning and development processes. Staff observe children to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to identify developmental gaps, support differentiation, inform children's next steps in learning and monitor their progress.

On entry practitioners will observe their key children in the 7 areas of learning in the first 6 weeks to identify what their interests are and what they know and can do.

Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Alongside the EYFS we also use the non-statutory guidance of Development Matters that practitioner use as a guide to support their professional judgements of each of their key child's learning and development. We also make use of systems such as Every child's a talker (ECAT) and Every child's a mover (ECAM) to identify and support emerging needs.

When a child is aged between 2 and 3, the EYFS requires that we produce a small written summery in the 3 prime areas, which is known as Progress check at age two. The progress check is to highlight the child's strengths and identify any concerns if the child's progress is less than expected. The child's keyworker will share the written summery with parents/carers which enables them to have a clear understanding of their child's development.

Any concerns that are identified will be discussed with the child's parents and we will put a support plan in place and involve any other agencies that are required.

Parents/carers

We recognise that parents are their child's first and most enduring educators. We work in partnership with parents by:

- Inviting parents and carers to stay for a stay and play session prior to the child starting at preschool.
- Requesting information from the parents/carers in the form of 'all about me'
- Sharing developmental assessments and reports and setting targets in partnership with and which include the views and wishes of the parent/carer.
- Sharing information and providing links to other opportunities to learning such as book start.

Key Person System

Each child is allocated a key person. This person supports the needs of the child, maintains and updates assessment profiles and sets targets which include the views and wishes of the parents. Key persons meet with parents/carers regularly to review progress.

Key persons have both formal and informal opportunities to discuss the learning needs and styles of each child throughout the week both in session and during team meetings.

Each child has a buddy key person who supports their needs if the primary key person is not available.

Attendance

Children can attend for a maximum of 30 hours per week. This means that they can attend every day for the whole session. Practitioners will make sure that these children do not simply repeat previous experiences and learning without some developmental meaning or challenge.

We do this by:

- Planning for the week, making sure that we are meeting all children's developmental needs and offering learning and development opportunities that builds on prior knowledge and learning.
- Ensuring the environment has opportunities for free access and that children can choose to add to their previous play or scaffold their own learning.

Transition

Children usually leave at the end of their foundation 1 year to start their foundation 2 year at primary school. Occasionally children leave midterm for other reasons. We support transition by:

- Having a good knowledge of local schools and educational providers and our role in moving children to these providers.
- Implementing a sound transition where information is shared between parents/carers and providers
- Differentiating transition to support individual children and their needs
- Arranging visits out and encouraging teacher/practitioner visits into preschool so that children can meet new teachers and feel reassured.
- Informing other professionals about the movement of children, where appropriate.

This policy was accepted at a meeting of St Joseph's Preschool Trustees.

Policies will be reviewed each academic year.

This policy will be reviewed sooner if there is a change to legislation or guidance which may affect it.

