

# St Augustine's Catholic Primary School



EYFS Policy 2025-27

***“We love and learn together by growing in  
friendship with Jesus”***

***Linked virtues:***

***‘Learned and Wise’, ‘Attentive and Discerning’,  
‘Curious and Active’, ‘Compassionate and Loving’ &  
‘Intentional and prophetic’***

***Autumn 2025***

## **Principles**

This policy outlines our approach to supporting the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at St. Augustine's School, specifically in our Nursery and Reception classes. Our goal is to provide a warm, stimulating, and supportive environment in which every child can flourish, grow, and reach their fullest potential. In alignment with the EYFS Statutory Framework (2021), we strive to offer high-quality education and care that is consistently delivered across both Nursery and Reception, while also being responsive to the individual needs of our pupils.

As a Catholic Primary School, we hold the following principles central to our approach:

- **Welcoming Environment:** We provide a safe, secure, and nurturing atmosphere where children feel valued and confident to explore and learn.
- **Play-Based Learning:** We foster a love of learning through purposeful, engaging, and fun play-based activities that allow children to explore their interests and express themselves.
- **Emotional Development:** We support the personal, social, and emotional growth of children, helping them build confidence, resilience, and positive relationships with others.
- **Well-Rounded Curriculum:** We offer a diverse and inclusive curriculum that covers all areas of learning and development, driven by thought-provoking questions and the interests of our cohort.
- **Parental Partnership:** We value the partnership between home and school, recognizing the important role that parents and carers play in supporting and guiding their child's learning journey.
- **Smooth Transitions:** We ensure that children are well-prepared for the next stage of their education, facilitating a smooth and positive transition from Nursery to Reception and beyond.

## **Intent**

At St. Augustine's School, we are dedicated to doing our very best for every child, providing an education where they feel happy, safe, and cared for. We strive to create a stimulating, supportive, and challenging learning environment where each child can thrive — with Christ at the centre of all we do, as we love and learn together, growing in friendship with Him. Our intent is to achieve this by delivering a rich and diverse curriculum that excites, stimulates, and challenges every learner. Our goal is to spark a lifelong love of learning, where curiosity, wonder, and awe are at the heart, enabling every child to reach their full potential.

## **Implementation of the EYFS Framework and Areas of Learning**

In line with the EYFS Statutory Framework (2021), we focus on seven key areas of learning and development, which are divided into Prime Areas and Specific Areas:

### **Prime Areas:**

1. Communication and Language
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social, and Emotional Development (PSED)

### **Specific Areas:**

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

At St. Augustine's, we ensure a balanced approach to the development of all areas, with particular emphasis on the prime areas in Nursery, as these provide the foundation for later learning.

### **The Role of Play in Learning**

Play lies at the heart of the EYFS curriculum. In both Nursery and Reception, children participate in both child-initiated play and adult-led activities. These play opportunities are crucial for fostering skills and knowledge in a meaningful and enjoyable way.

Structured Play is designed to enhance social interaction, communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Through these experiences, children are encouraged to engage with the EYFS Characteristics of Effective Learning, which include:

- **Playing and Exploring:** Children investigate, experience new things, and take risks in their learning.
- **Active Learning:** Children remain engaged, persist through challenges, and celebrate their achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically:** Children develop their own ideas, make connections between concepts, and think independently.

### **Learning and Teaching Approach**

Since play is central to how young children learn best, our curriculum provides a wide range of carefully planned, play-based, cross-curricular activities that span all seven areas of learning. These activities are carried out in both our indoor and outdoor classrooms.

Teaching in Nursery and Reception is flexible, responding to the children's interests, needs, and developmental stages. This enables us to provide opportunities for children to explore their individual interests, broadening their learning through play, which is both child-centred and developmentally appropriate.

Our staff plan activities that encourage both structured and unstructured play. These activities are designed to challenge children, helping them think critically, solve problems, and communicate effectively. In Nursery, the focus is on developing the prime areas, while in Reception, we give equal weighting to all seven areas of learning through interactive and engaging activities.

Scaffolded interactions are key to deepening children's learning. Teachers engage with children at every opportunity, asking open-ended questions, offering prompts, and guiding them to think more critically. Activities are adapted to meet the diverse needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), ensuring that each child is both challenged and supported in an appropriate way.

### **Medium Term Planning (MTP)**

At the heart of our curriculum is play-based learning, recognising that young children learn best through play. The Medium Term Plan (MTP) is reviewed annually and adapted based on the developmental needs and interests of each cohort. Planning is carried out collaboratively between the Nursery and Reception teams every Wednesday, ensuring a cohesive approach to teaching and learning. In our EYFS setting, we have dedicated staff members known as Play Partners (PP). Their role is to encourage and support child-initiated learning, guiding children as needed and helping to extend their learning during independent play. Play Partners also carry out observations to inform assessments and revisit children's learning from the current or previous week.

## **Learning Environment**

Our EYFS learning environment includes both indoor and outdoor classrooms, which are carefully set up each morning by staff and pupils with a range of independent activities. These activities, mostly based on the previous week's focused learning, allow children to revisit and consolidate their understanding.

Children are encouraged to direct their own learning by accessing materials, developing their own activities, and asking questions with the support of a Play Partner if needed. This setup promotes independence, self-direction, and problem-solving.

At St. Augustine's, we recognise the diverse learning styles of children—visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic—and we plan activities that cater to these needs. This ensures all children can engage with the curriculum in a way that suits them best.

Assessment for Learning (AfL) is continuous throughout the EYFS, primarily through informal observations and regular staff discussions. These help inform planning and guide children's next steps in learning. We value close collaboration with parents and guardians, who are seen as the child's first educators. We collect insights through informal conversations, "wow" cards, and parental documentation, which supports our assessments.

Before children start in Nursery or Reception, we invite parents to an Induction meeting, introducing them to the school community and the EYFS curriculum. This provides an opportunity for staff to learn about each child, as well as for parents to share information about their child's development, health, and prior experiences. Parents are also asked to complete a questionnaire to give us further insights before their child starts school in September.

In Nursery, we conduct home visits in September, where we meet children and parents in their own homes. These visits allow us to gather more information about each child in a familiar setting and carry out informal assessments. We also hold "stay and play" sessions to help children become comfortable with their new environment. These transitions are supported by a staggered start, with all children having settled by the second week of September.

Baseline assessments are conducted in Nursery in all seven areas of learning, using informal observations and activities aligned with the Development Matters framework. These assessments are tracked through Insight (data tool). For children who are not on track, targeted next steps are put in place to close any gaps, with Play Partners playing a key role in supporting this process.

In Reception, the transition continues with a gradual induction process. The Reception teacher meets with the Nursery teacher in July to discuss each child's development, and relevant documentation is shared to ensure a smooth transition. Children who did not attend Nursery are also supported with home visits and "stay and play" sessions. Baseline assessments are carried out in line with the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), introduced in Autumn 2021, covering Communication & Language, Literacy, and Maths. At the end of Reception, the Early Years data is submitted to the Local Authority (LA) and they send this on to the Standard Testing Agency (STA).

Throughout both Nursery and Reception, we assess children's progress regularly through observations, formal and informal assessments, and ongoing staff discussions. This data is recorded onto Insight, which is also reported to our Multi-Academy Company (MAC), Our Lady and All Saints. Phonics and RE assessments are carried out as directed by Subject Leads, and children's progress is tracked and discussed at regular meetings with the Head Teacher. We also engage in moderation at both school, MAC and Local Authority levels to ensure consistency in assessing children's learning.

At St. Augustine's, our curriculum is guided by key documents, including the EYFS Curriculum Guidance, the Solihull Long Term Plan (LTP), Learning and Growing as the People of God, Little Wandle, White Rose Maths, National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Maths (NCEM), The Power of PE, and Jigsaw. We ensure that the EYFS principles are at the heart of our practice, allowing for effective and supportive learning experiences for all children.

Our approach is based on a 2-year cycle, with each term exploring a new topic. Every topic begins with a thought-provoking question to spark curiosity. Our Medium Term Plans (MTPs) are reviewed termly to ensure they meet the needs and interests of the children. The planning process involves both adult-led, adult-initiated, and child-initiated learning opportunities. The classroom is designed to encourage independence while supporting the development of the characteristics of learning.

Nursery and Reception staff meet weekly to review the previous week's learning, discuss children's needs, and plan for the upcoming week's focused activities. The teachers take responsibility for planning, ensuring that each activity has a clear learning objective and is differentiated to meet the needs of all children. If children require additional support, this is communicated to staff, and intervention groups are formed to help close gaps. The Pupil Premium (PP) lead also contributes to these meetings, sharing observations and next steps for individual children.

If needed, intervention groups are set up across all 7 areas of learning. In phonics, smaller groups are used for children who need extra support, and we follow Time for Talk in Nursery and the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) programme in Reception for children who require additional assistance with Communication, Language, and Literacy (CLL).

Both Nursery and Reception have a clear, structured timetable that ensures a balance across all areas of learning, but for Nursery there is more of a focus on the prime areas. Both year group timetables include dedicated time for phonics (following Little Wandle revised Letters and Sounds scheme), maths (following the NCEM and White Rose plans), regular story sessions, rhyme and poetry, non-fiction text sharing, PE lessons, and 10% of teaching time for Religious Education (RE) each week.

### **Impact of Our Curriculum**

Our curriculum and its delivery ensure that all children make at least good progress. We attribute this success to a rich blend of play-based exploration, rigorous assessment, and high-quality teaching throughout the early years. This approach lays the foundation for all future learning, supporting not only academic achievement but also the social, moral, and spiritual development of each child. Our aim is to nurture confident, curious, and happy learners who are well-prepared to be active, responsible citizens and enthusiastic, life-long learners.

### **Working with Parents and Guardians**

Recognizing that parents and guardians are a child's first educators, we prioritize building strong partnerships with families to support each child's unique learning journey.

- **On Entry:** When children join Nursery or Reception, we ask parents/guardians to complete a questionnaire about their child's needs and conduct a home visit to gather valuable insights. This helps us tailor our approach to each child's development.
- **Ongoing Communication:** We maintain an "open door" policy, welcoming parents to share information or concerns informally. Additionally, parents can schedule meetings with staff at a convenient time.

- **Parental Involvement:** Parents are encouraged to contribute through termly questionnaires, where they can share what their child enjoyed learning and what they'd like to explore next. Parents also fill out 'Wow' cards to highlight developmental milestones observed at home or in external environments. These moments are celebrated with staff and peers in school.
- **Home-School Connection:** Reception children have a home-school link book and reading record, ensuring regular communication between staff and parents.

### Parent Workshops & Events

We believe in supporting parents' understanding of the curriculum and fostering an active role in their child's education. We offer several opportunities for parents to get involved:

- **Workshops:** In the Autumn term, Reception parents are invited to Phonics and Maths workshops to understand how we teach these essential skills.
- **Parent's Evenings:** We hold parent consultation evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms to discuss each child's progress.
- **End of Year Report:** In the Summer, we send home a written report detailing a child's progress, achievements, targets, and attitude.
- **Celebrating Success:** Pupils' achievements are regularly shared on our Social media platforms, and key milestones are celebrated during assemblies. Each week, Reception children are recognised as "Learner of the Week" or for demonstrating Catholic Social Teaching. 'Wow' cards from home are celebrated in class.

### Ongoing Communication

We provide a range of ways to keep parents informed:

- **Newsletters:** We send home termly newsletters to share learning intentions, key updates, and upcoming events.
- **School Website & Social Media:** Our website is regularly updated with useful information and school newsletters, and we share updates via our social media platforms.

### Opportunities for Parent Participation

We value parental engagement and encourage participation in the following events throughout the year:

- **Assemblies and Masses**
- **Seasonal Workshops (e.g., Christmas, Lent/Easter)**
- **Christmas Concerts**
- **Parental Consultation Meetings**
- **Open Sessions (Summer Term)**
- **Sports Day and Summer Fair**
- **Nursery & Reception Library Sessions**
- **Fundraising/Charity Events**

Through these events, we strengthen the partnership between school and home, ensuring our pupils receive the best possible start to their educational journey.

## **Staff Organisation and Management**

The EYFS Phase Leader is Mrs. R. Goodwin, who is responsible for overseeing the entire EYFS provision. She leads the staff within the EYFS and works closely with other members of the school team, including staff and Governors, to implement new developments within the EYFS framework. Each class in the Foundation Stage is supported by a teacher and a teaching assistant.

## **Equal Opportunity and SEND**

We are committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse environment where every child is valued and respected. Our EYFS curriculum actively promotes:

- **Celebration of Diversity:** Our activities and resources reflect a wide range of cultures, backgrounds, and family structures.
- **Equal Opportunities:** We ensure that every child has equal access to the curriculum, regardless of their background, gender, or abilities.

Our Mission Statement affirms our commitment to equality and inclusion: "All members of the school will be equally valued... in a caring environment which reflects the teachings of Christ."

In the EYFS, all children will be treated fairly and supported in reaching their full potential. We strive to create an environment where children feel welcome, valued, secure, and confident. Discrimination of any kind is unacceptable, and we actively encourage an appreciation of all differences.

For more detailed information, please refer to the School's Equal Opportunities and SEND policies.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation are ongoing at St. Augustine's School. The EYFS team regularly observes the learning environment, with planned reviews conducted throughout the year. These observations are carried out annually by the Head Teacher and Subject Leaders. The EYFS team continuously assesses the environment, ensuring it remains conducive to children's development. School self-evaluation is also an ongoing process, and we conduct audits at various points in the year. Any identified areas for improvement are incorporated into the School Development Plan (SDP).

The Early Years lead teacher will review and approve this policy every two years, ensuring that it remains up to date. At each review, the policy will be shared with the governing board. The Early Years Governor will meet with the EYFS lead teacher annually to discuss the EYFS Action Plan and relevant sections of the Strategic SDP.

## **Safeguarding and Welfare**

At St. Augustine's, we follow a clear Safeguarding Policy that applies to the EYFS, in line with the most recent "Keeping Children Safe in Education" guidelines. This policy outlines the procedures in place to safeguard the safety and well-being of all children and staff across the EYFS and the wider school community. All school policies are relevant to the EYFS. Staff members receive regular safeguarding training and are well-informed on the procedures for reporting concerns.

Certain staff within EYFS have completed Paediatric First Aid Training and are designated as responsible for First Aid within the environment. Their names are clearly displayed within the EYFS environment for the awareness of all visitors. Other support staff are trained in Basic First Aid. Further staff members have completed First Aid at Work training.

Medication administered to children in the EYFS follows EYFS guidance and the school's Medication Administration Policy, and parents are informed of what medication was given and when.

We are committed to promoting safe and healthy eating practices in line with EYFS statutory requirements. We ensure that all mealtimes and snack times are supervised by trained staff who are aware of individual dietary needs, allergies, and any specific eating requirements. Foods provided are age-appropriate, and children are encouraged to sit calmly while eating. Staff are trained in first aid for choking and are vigilant in observing children during meals. We work closely with parents to support safe eating habits and ensure all dietary and medical needs are clearly documented, regularly reviewed, and consistently followed.

We actively promote health and well-being through participation in the free fruit and milk schemes for children under five. For Reception children, we provide the universal infant free school meal, with menus regularly reviewed and updated. The school kitchen, run by Aspens, accommodates children with special dietary requirements, and these needs are also considered in classroom cooking and baking activities.

Fresh drinking water is always available, and children are encouraged to bring their own water bottles, enabling them to hydrate freely throughout the day.

Children's privacy is respected through the careful design of toilet areas and by staff consistently following our school's Intimate Care Policy.

*'The following are the fundamental principles upon which this Policy and guidelines are based:*

*Every child/young person has the right to:*

- *be safe.*
- *personal privacy.*
- *be treated as an individual.*
- *be treated with dignity and respect.*
- *be involved and consulted in their own intimate personal care to the best of their abilities.*
- *express their views on their own intimate personal care and to have such views taken into account.*
- *have levels of intimate personal care that are as consistent as possible.'*  
*(St. Augustine's School Intimate Care Policy)*

We maintain a safe, clean, and well-kept environment, both indoors and outdoors, to support the physical development and well-being of our children. Comprehensive risk assessments are carried out annually for the EYFS by the EYFS Leader and the Head Teacher. Health and Safety concerns are reported to the Head Teacher and Site Manager. For further information on Health and Safety procedures, please refer to the school's Health and Safety Policy.

To ensure the safety and privacy of all children, staff must store all personal devices securely and out of reach during working hours. Photographs of children may only be taken in line with our Safeguarding, Data Protection and Mobile Phone Policies. These measures help to maintain a safe and professional environment for all children in our care. Staff sign a Code of Conduct yearly which states:

*'No mobile phones should be out on classroom desks when pupils are in school. The mobile phones of all EYFS staff are to be kept in a locker in the staffroom, not in classes.'* (St Augustine Code of Conduct 2025).

## **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

We provide individualised support for children with SEND, working closely with parents/guardians, and external professionals, to ensure every child is included and able to access the curriculum.

### **Transition**

Starting school can be a challenging experience for young children. To ensure this transition is as smooth and positive as possible, we carefully plan the process to support each child and help them settle into their new class quickly and happily. We have established a clear transition programme that includes the following steps:

- **Teacher Collaboration:** A meeting takes place between the Nursery and Reception teachers and Reception and Year 1 teachers, where essential information is exchanged. The Nursery/Reception teacher provides details on the children's welfare, academic progress, and general development, ensuring that the Reception/Year 1 teacher is well-prepared for the new cohort. This collaboration also allows the Nursery/Reception teacher to explain any specific needs of the children, ensuring the environment is adapted to best support their learning and well-being at the start of the Autumn term.
- **Introduction to the Year 1 Classroom:** In the final few weeks of the summer term, the Reception children are taken to the Year 1 classroom by their current class teacher. They are introduced to the Year 1 teacher, and the Year 1 teacher engages with the Reception children by reading stories and delivering short lessons. One of these sessions takes place in the Year 1 classroom to familiarise the children with their new environment before the summer holidays. This occurs during a whole school transition day, typically at the end of June or beginning of July.

This policy was reviewed by the EYFS Leader and Head Teacher in September 2025.

It was agreed by the EYFS staff in September 2025.

The policy was shared with the Governors in October 2025.

Review date: Bi-Annually.