



# Our Lady of Good Help

## Catholic Primary School

### Early Years Policy

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*'Like Our Lady, we live wisely, think deeply and love generously, in Christ'*

## **Transition**

At Our Lady of Good Help (OLGH) Early Years Setting, we recognise the importance of smooth transitions for children entering our setting. We will work closely with parents and previous childcare providers to gather information about each child's individual needs, preferences, and interests. Transition activities are planned to support children's emotional wellbeing and familiarity with the new environment, ensuring a positive start to their early education journey. Our Early Years Lead carries out visits to nurseries to collect information on each child and speak with the staff as well as meet the children. Following this, we arrange stay and play sessions in school in the summer term prior to starting as well as parent meetings 1:1 and altogether to share information regarding the school. Parents are informed about the importance of school attendance during these early meetings. We stagger the first week of the year to enable the children to begin to feel comfortable in their new setting, getting to know each other and the staff. This is a perfect time to teach the children the rules and routines to enable them to settle quickly into life at OLGH.

## **Baseline**

We will conduct baseline assessments upon entry to assess each child's current level of development and identify any areas for additional support or intervention. These assessments will inform our planning and provision to ensure that every child receives personalised learning experiences tailored to their individual needs.

Staff make initial observations such as what hand they like to write with, the names of family members and their early interests. It is an opportunity for the EYFS lead to coordinate with our SENCO to see if early intervention is required.

As a school, we carry out the DfE Baseline Assessment as well as a Talk Boost Assessment.

## **Language Development**

Language development is a crucial aspect of early years education. We will provide a language-rich environment where children are encouraged to communicate, express themselves, and develop their vocabulary and language skills through play-based activities, storytelling, and meaningful interactions with adults and peers.

Adults use the ShREC approach when interacting with the children in the provision. They plan appropriate activities to enhance their language skills, building upon prior knowledge and referencing specific vocabulary. We encourage children to speak in full sentences by modelling how to do so in a positive and encouraging manner (colourful semantics).

The children listen to stories regularly; take part in a rhyme of the week or poem of the week; all children take part in the Talk Boost intervention; and children learn to develop their sentence level skills through the use of Talk for Writing.

## **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

We will promote the characteristics of effective learning, including curiosity, creativity, resilience, and independence, through our play-based approach to teaching and learning. Children will be encouraged to explore, investigate, and problem-solve independently, fostering a love for learning and a positive attitude towards challenges. The essential characteristics of effective learning are: play & exploring, active learning, being focused & concentrated, critical thinking, developing their own ideas and perseverance.

## **Areas of Learning in EYFS**

Our curriculum will cover all seven areas of learning outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, including:

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

## **Phonics**

Phonics is an integral part of our early years provision, supporting children's development of early reading and writing skills. We follow a systematic and structured phonics program, Read Write Inc., providing daily phonics sessions that are engaging, interactive, and tailored to each child's needs. Children begin to learn to read as soon as they start school. As the children progress in their reading, they move through the different stages of the programme and we ensure that they are always being taught at the correct level through frequent assessment. Children who need additional support to keep up are given 1:1 tutoring sessions (short 10 minute sessions daily). Children are provided with access to a virtual classroom which parents can use to support them at home in their speed sounds lessons. On top of this, adults use pinny time and FRED games to help children to recap and recall previous learning.

## **Continuous Provision**

We believe in the importance of continuous provision to support children's independent learning and exploration. Our indoor and outdoor learning environments are carefully planned and resourced to provide a wide range of open-ended opportunities for children to engage in purposeful play, experimentation, and discovery. Within continuous provision, there is 'enhanced provision' of current topics alongside more permanent features such as the mud kitchen, the construction area and our library. The outside space is used to enhance the children's physical development - fine and gross motor skills - through lifting, carrying, running, jumping, cutting, sticking etc.

## **Curriculum**

Our early years curriculum has been carefully planned and used as the starting point for our children's learning journey through the school - the foundation blocks to learning. Subject leaders are acutely aware of the essential skills and knowledge that the children need to gain in the early years however it is responsive to children's interests and developmental needs too. It is designed to promote all aspects of children's learning and development, including cognitive, social, emotional, and physical domains, and will incorporate a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities.

We use Power Maths throughout the school and this starts in EYFS - a mastery approach to the teaching of maths. We use Read Write Inc. for phonics teaching and Talk 4 Writing for speaking, listening and writing. We have access to a wide range of high-quality resources and ensure that these are used effectively to support the children's learning.

Adults provide children with short inputs of direction and then embed activities within the enhanced provision as well as work with small groups, guiding them through the learning. There are reading and writing opportunities in all areas of our provision.

## **PSED (Personal, Social, and Emotional Development)**

We will prioritise the development of children's PSED, fostering positive self-esteem, emotional resilience, and social skills. Through nurturing relationships with adults and peers, children will learn to manage their feelings, develop empathy and respect for others, and build positive relationships within the setting and beyond. We use the 'Zones of Regulation' to support this approach. They learn to recognise and describe how they feel through the use of 4 colours. These aid conversations about how they feel and what they can do to regulate their emotions. We also use circle times and Prayer & Liturgy alongside rewards to enhance self-esteem and teach independence. We use adults from within our local community to support teaching, such as the police, postal workers or our Parish Priest.

## **Assessment**

The EYFS lead makes summative judgments on a termly basis but assessment is very much an ongoing process. Adults play in the provision with the children and encourage good vocabulary and language and note when this is done well and progress is being made. Children are assessed at least every 6 weeks in phonics and significant 'WOW' moments are noted and shared with parents during parents' evenings. Attainment and progress is shared in the end of year school reports for parents too.

Moderation events are attended by staff to ensure judgements are accurate.

## **CPD for Staff**

We are committed to providing ongoing professional development opportunities for our staff to enhance their knowledge, skills, and practice in early years education. CPD activities will be tailored to the needs of individual

staff members and will focus on areas such as child development, pedagogy, assessment, and inclusive practice.

EYFS staff receive regular support and CPD in Read, Write Inc. through weekly team meetings and are kept up to date with the latest developments through attendance at Network and School Improvement Liverpool training.

### **Parental Involvement**

We recognise the importance of strong partnerships with parents and caregivers in supporting children's learning and development. We will actively involve parents in their child's early education journey through regular communication, parent workshops, and opportunities for parental engagement in learning activities and events.

School produces a weekly newsletter to keep parents updated with news from school. Parents are able to access Google Classroom to receive weekly homework and they are invited in for stay and plays as well as performances and other events for the school community such as fairs, sports days and PTA events.

### **Transition to Year 1**

We will work closely with Year 1 staff to ensure a smooth transition for children moving from our early years setting to Year 1. Transition activities will be carefully planned to familiarise children with the routines, expectations, and learning environment of Year 1, helping to ensure a successful transition and continuity of learning. Attainment information is shared with our colleagues as to whether children have achieved GLD (Good Level of Development) and what areas they need to continue to work on.

During the school year, whenever children are ready, they are encouraged to join in play times and lunch times on the 'big yard' with Y1 and Y2 children. This gives them a sense of achievement and promotes a sense of togetherness amongst all children and prepares them for life beyond EYFS.