

Our Lady's Early Years Curriculum

In Our Lady's Early Years Foundation Stage, we aim for our children to be independent and curious learners who are safe and happy. We strongly believe that all children should receive the very best educational experiences, allowing them to fulfil their unique potential and providing them with the essential skills and knowledge that they need for their future success.

We understand that our children come from a variety of backgrounds and our curriculum ensures that we build on this wide range of starting points so that all children can progress regardless of how they have entered our setting. This curriculum, alongside our well-resourced environment, skilled staff and strong parental relationships ensure that we have high ambitions for each child.

This approach is supported through the implementation of the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Learning and Development requirements and the Characteristics of Effective Learning. The EYFS learning and development requirement comprises of seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes (see below)

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

The development level that children are expected to attain by the end of the EYFS is defined by the early learning goals (ELGs). The ELGs are;

- Communication and Language

ELG: Listening, attention and Understanding
ELG: Speaking

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

ELG: Self-Regulation
ELG: Managing Self
ELG: Building Relationships

- Physical Development

ELG: Gross Motor Skills
ELG: Fine Motor Skills

- Literacy

ELG: Comprehension
ELG: Word Reading

ELG: Writing

- Mathematics

ELG: Number

ELG: Numerical Patterns

- Understanding the World

ELG: Past and Present

ELG: People, Culture and Communities

ELG: The Natural World

- Expressive Arts and Design

ELG: Creating with Materials

ELG: Being Imaginative and Expressive

Implementation

At Our Lady's, we operate our Nursery and Reception classes as an Early Years unit which enables us to have our environment set up for a wide range of needs and abilities, allowing all children to access and develop their skills. Resources are linked logically to the learning intentions or skills progressions currently underway, whilst also providing open ended scenarios so that children can follow their own imagination or lines of enquiry, and be challenged or supported at any moment. Staff have high expectations and are skilled in supporting the children within the provision, ensuring our children are challenged and progressive in their learning, while modelling key language, intentional vocabulary extension and supporting social skills. We carefully structure our day to balance short adult-led learning, with longer child-led sessions. We expect both approaches to foster the characteristics of effective learning and produce deep level learning. Staff adapt teaching when necessary and respond to children's contributions and individual needs.

We recognise that in order for the children to be able to access the curriculum we must ensure that the skills needed in the prime areas are developed and embedded, in particular in communication and language. To achieve this, we assess all our Foundation Stage children using the Wellcomm screening and set up targeted interventions to support those children who are not on track. These interventions, along with a language rich environment, effective modelling by skilled staff and multiple daily opportunities to share books and vocabulary will ensure that we narrow the gap for these children and allow them to succeed across the areas of learning.

At Our Lady's, the children follow the Read, Write, Inc phonic programme, which is taught daily. Phonically regular texts are provided at these early stages so that children have the opportunity to practise and apply their phonic knowledge and skills and their knowledge of common exception words. Teachers plan sessions, which also involve the teacher reading good quality and engaging texts to the children. We believe that reading is not only an important life skill and a way of learning new information, but is also a great source of pleasure. Therefore, many different opportunities are planned to develop both the children's reading skills and their enjoyment of reading across the curriculum.

We believe that play and practical exploration are key to both developing a strong conceptual understanding in maths and in engaging children in the enjoyment of maths. Concepts are introduced through concrete representations, and practice and consolidation play a central role in developing children's understanding and confidence.

At Our Lady's, staff aim to develop warm, trusting relationships with all children, interacting well with them and taking time to listen to their views and opinions. The gospel values are interwoven into all aspects of the curriculum and school life, facilitating children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children learn about the importance of having a healthy body and mind through direct teaching experiences and through activities, such as yoga.

At Our Lady's we recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators. We endeavour to work closely with parents as we recognise that when parents and practitioners work together, the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning. We work closely with parents' through:

- Intake information meetings before children begin at our school.
- Stay and Play sessions each half term based on an area of learning.
- Phonics workshops (autumn term) where parents and carers can join in with their child's phonics lesson and hear how we teach phonics in school and how they can support at home.
- Formal Parents' Evenings which are held twice a year, at which the teacher discuss the child's progress.
- Parents receiving a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- A range of activities throughout the year which encourage collaboration between the children, parents and school: Class assemblies, Collective Worship, and Sports Days etc.
- Parents are invited to join 'Class Dojo', our online communication system. Parents can view their child's portfolio online and can contribute with their own photographs and learning from home.
- Parents can use Class Dojo to communicate with EYFS staff and have any questions answered.

Impact

At Our Lady's, we recognise the unique needs of each child and support them in reaching their potential. Our approaches support the children in developing their collaborative and independent skills, as well as empathy and the need to recognise the achievement of others. In free flow-learning, children bounce back after difficulties, seek challenges and take risks. The impact of our broad, relevant and challenging Early Years curriculum is measured in the experiences, confidence and competence of our children across the seven areas of learning. We ensure children receive the experiences they require, both within and beyond the curriculum, to develop their skills and knowledge and become confident, independent learners who are ready to move on to accessing the National Curriculum, if applicable.