

**St. Alphonsus' Catholic**  
**Primary School**



**EYFS**

**Curriculum Rationale**

## **Our Curriculum Rationale**

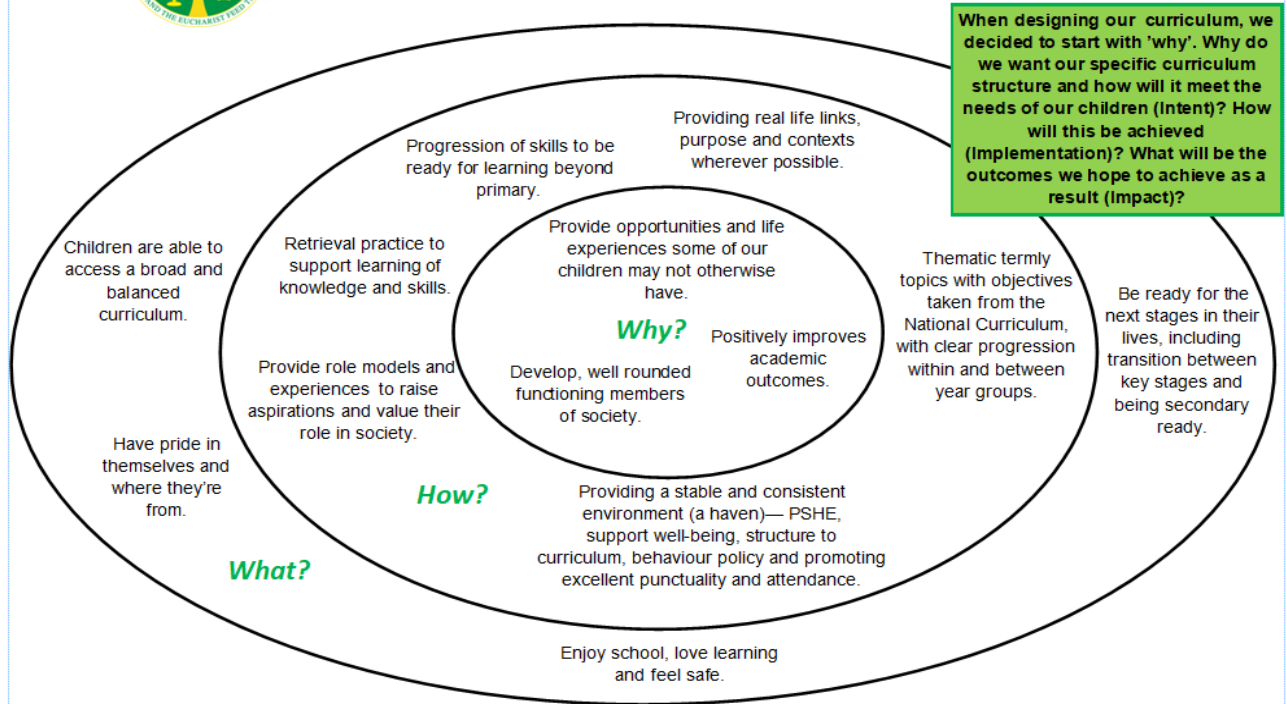
We know our curriculum must meet the needs of the children within the context of our school. Our children begin school with low levels of personal and social development, language, speech issues, fine motor skills and have limited experiences with observing occurrences of the natural and wider world. This can impact our children's starting points with speaking and listening, phonics and reading (due to limited experiences with books) and knowledge and understanding of the world.

As a result, we have tailored our curriculum to address these areas and ensure that children have the best foundation as possible to build upon their knowledge and skills as they move through the school.

In line with our whole school curriculum intent, in EYFS we focus on providing a range of experiences and opportunities for learning to take place. We nurture and develop the whole of the child so that they happy, feel safe, are confident and are ready to progress into KS1 and beyond. Ultimately with these things in place, we aim to improve their outcomes from their lower than average starting points so that they can make positive steps with their place in society and continuing education.



## St. Alphonsus' Catholic Primary Curriculum



### Seven Key Features of Effective Practice

We follow the seven key features of effective practice (Development Matters 2020) to ensure that our children have the best learning experiences possible. The seven key features consist of:

1. The best for every child
2. High-quality care
3. The curriculum: what we want children to learn
4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn
5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt
6. Self-regulation and executive function
7. Partnership with parents

#### **1. The best for every child**

Our way of working supports the uniqueness of every child. By following their interests and supporting them with what they need at that time of engagement, we ensure that our children receive personalised learning.

We are an inclusive setting and support those children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), identifying those needing extra support so that they can progress with their learning.

Our school is in an area of significant deprivation, with children's starting points being very low upon entry. To support our children, especially those who are disadvantaged we have an exciting curriculum and interventions to address gaps. Interventions vary according to children's needs and may extend to 1:1 or extra speech and language support. However, these are the main interventions we provide for our children as part of our curriculum.

<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Year Group</b>
Dough disco (Fine motor skills)	Nursery
Wake up shake up (Gross Motor skills)	Nursery
Blast 1 (Listening and attention, phase 1 phonics support)	Nursery
Primary Movement (Gross and fine motor skills, concentration and behaviour)	Reception
NELI (Nuffield Early Language Intervention)	Reception
Teodescu (Perceptuo-motor skills)	Reception
Little Wandle (phonics and reading intervention)	Reception

## **2. High quality Care**

Young children learn to be independent and resilient when supported through loving and secure relationships with parents/carers. Children coming into St. Alphonsus' will develop positive relationships with key staff to enable them to feel safe, secure and ready to learn through play. We create a warm and welcoming atmosphere, where children are respected and valued and where their well-being comes before anything else. We support our children to thrive socially and emotionally so that they are able to continue into KS1 and beyond with secure foundations for emotional health and wellbeing and learning. As a

result, our curriculum has a heavy emphasis on supporting children with their personal, social and emotional health and wellbeing.

### **3. The Curriculum: What we want children to learn**

#### Planning

##### Learning Provocations

We plan for half termly learning provocations to engage and motivate our children in interesting themes (See Appendix 1). The purpose of this to invite children to explore themes in the environment which may interest them in different aspects of their learning. By doing this, we are providing opportunities for children to be inquisitive and experience new concepts. It is also to encourage children to use language and communication skills as they investigate.

We plan specifically for the delivery of inputs in phonics, maths, PE and RE following agreed planning documents and schemes of work.

Phonics – Following Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised and using a full set of phonetically matched reading books. This begins in week 2 of Reception.

Maths – White Rose Maths schemes of work in line with the whole school for consistency and broken down into smaller steps for nursery.

PE – PE passport which supports planning and assessment of physical educations across school. This is used across school and across Nicholas Postage Catholic Academy Trust.

RE – Come and See Scheme of work which is used across school and Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust.

##### Language & Vocabulary

As our children's starting points for language is very low, we provide a range of opportunities to develop vocabulary and language skills. This includes our use

of Talk For Writing, small group reading sessions and development through play. Practitioners are expected to model language and vocabulary in all we do.

### Cultural Capital

Cultural Capital is defined by Ofsted as "the essential knowledge that children need to be educated citizens" (p31 *Ofsted EY Inspection Handbook*). It goes on to say:

Cultural capital is the essential knowledge that children need to prepare them for their future success. It is about giving children the best possible start to their early education. As part of making a judgement about the quality of education, inspectors will consider how well leaders use the curriculum to enhance the experience and opportunities available to children, particularly the most disadvantaged. (142 p31 *Ofsted Early Years Inspection Handbook*, Sept 2019)

As mentioned previously, our curriculum aims to provide a range of opportunities and experiences which support children in their preparation for the future and follows our whole school intent at the start of this document.

Ways in which our curriculum supports Cultural Capital include:

Educational visits - seaside, farm, museums, parks/woodland, local shops, church
Identifying and promoting aspirations – ‘When I’m older I want to be’, role play opportunities, talk about jobs and how to achieve them, provide experiences to promote children’s interests.
Visitors and experiences in school – archaeological dino dig, nurse, police and fire service, member of the local community
Celebrating each other’s cultures and differences – celebrating religious festivals, foods, dress and language
Life skills & Healthy Lifestyles – preparing and cooking healthy foods for a healthy lifestyle, promoting an enjoyment of physical activity and skills; oral health – daily toothbrushing and learning around looking after our teeth

#### **4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn**

We have developed a way of teaching and learning which we feel helps our children to learn best and meets their needs.

##### **'Spotlight' Planning**

The cycle of observation, assessment, planning, is carried out on a step-by step basis. We have focus children each week (approximately 10% of the group). Activities that occur are recorded when the cycle is complete. These records are on the learning journeys for the focus children and on "Spotlight Planning" sheets for activities in which a group have become involved.

##### **We work in this way because ...**

"Babies and young children are experiencing and learning in the here and now, not storing up their questions until tomorrow or next week. It is in that moment of curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest – the 'teachable moment' – that the skilful adult makes a difference. By using this cycle on a moment-by-moment basis, the adult will be always alert to individual children (observation), always thinking about what it tells us about the child's thinking (assessment), and always ready to respond by using appropriate strategies at the right moment to support children's well-being and learning (planning for the next moment)."

From National Standards document Learning, Playing and Interacting P.22 - 23

We have focus children **NOT** focus activities.

**The adult goes to the child.**

##### **The Role of The Adult**

The adults are there to facilitate learning. They do this through observations and interactions. Our adults know the children very well and have a sound understanding of child development. This ensures that the adults enhance and extend the learning at the appropriate level.

The Ofsted definition of teaching (2015) fits exactly with our way of planning and teaching using our 'Spotlight' approach.

### Ofsted definition of teaching (2015)

Teaching should not be taken to imply a 'top down' or formal way of working. It is a broad term which covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities: communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges. It takes account of the equipment they provide and the attention to the physical environment as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations. Integral to teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do as well as take account of their interests and dispositions to learning (characteristics of effective learning), and use this information to plan children's next steps in learning and monitor their progress.'

### Observation

We use the observation cycle on a step by step basis. The focus children are given extra attention, but all the children are busy and learning all the time. The planning sheets are a record of activities that have occurred. It is particularly important that the adults' input (teaching) is recorded.

The symbol "T" indicates "adult".

Adult input is high-lighted in green as 'Green for Growth' is in line with our marking policy and is showing how the adult has identified the teaching in order to help our children grow in their knowledge, skills or understanding:-

"T suggests ... encourages ...models  
...wonders ...models ...helps ... provides resources . etc."

The "Spotlight planning sheets" are blank at the start of the week. (See EYFS Planning documents) They are then filled up gradually during the week. All adults contribute to these sheets. When possible, photos are printed and added to the records. In addition, "Wow" moments are recorded for all children as and when they occur.



Provision may also be developed through group activities, whereby a number of children become interested in something or want to explore a key theme. Staff facilitate the activity by providing resources, supporting and questioning etc to deepen children's understanding. Group planning sheets are completed across the week for some of these activities (See EYFS Planning documents).

### Indoor and Outdoor Enabling Environments

We have a **workshop style environment** indoors and outside. **Nothing is set out** on the tables. The children select what they want to do in each area.

The principal is that resources are accessible to the children and they are varied, open-ended and high quality. This gives children the opportunity to select resources to support their chosen activity.

Data analysis supports the development of our areas of provision so that we are addressing areas of need. Specific enhancements may be provided to ensure progression in skills or to extend/deepen learning.

We have high quality resources and space for the children and are very lucky to have an outdoor space which supports the seven areas of learning.

### 5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt

Upon starting nursery, children assessed against a baseline which is recorded onto our data tracking system (Arbor). Each term, nursery children's progress is updated onto the system and is analysed to look for trends and areas of development. This impacts on the provision within our setting as we may focus on the development of key areas depending on the data.

Reception children also complete a baseline assessment within the first six weeks of starting school, with records being updated each half term.

Across our early years, formative assessment is used carefully within our spotlight planning to identify next steps in learning, which is acted upon immediately with the child. This is where the planning and the subsequent teaching will take place. We have found that our children are much more

receptive to working in this way and it has more of an impact on their personalised learning needs. They are engaged in their activity at the precise moment, meaning the next step is more relevant than planning an activity to address their next steps the following week.

Our way of working aims to support staff to focus on working with the children in order help them make progress; not take them away from the child by carrying out unnecessary assessments. As a result, we want our staff to know the children really well and be able to articulate their knowledge of the child. This occurs through shared dialogue with other members of the EYFS team.

### Progress and Development

When children show high levels of involvement, that is when there is progress and development occurring – when the brain is at its most active. High level involvement occurs most often when children are able to pursue their own interests in an enabling environment supported by skilled staff. Spotlight Planning helps to make this possible. To support staff with identifying progress, we have developed our own progression documents for the different areas of learning (See EYFS progression document) and use these as benchmarks on where children should be working at different stages.

### 6. Self-regulation and executive function

Our curriculum aims to support children with self-regulation and executive function. Self-regulation and executive function skills enable us to plan, think, problem solve, interact with others, monitor and control our own behaviour, adjusting the ways in which we behave according to where we are. We support this in a variety of ways:

<b>Imaginative play and storytelling</b>	Role play areas and props Talk for writing Story maps
<b>Singing and music</b>	Nursery rhymes and songs linked to themes Primary Movement

	Music sessions School hymns
<b>Sensory play</b>	Messy play experiences Water & Sand play Playdough
<b>Creative and Construction</b>	Painting Model making Designing and creating before making
<b>PSED</b>	Modelling language for PSED Identifying Emotions Supporting play – taking turns, sharing etc Clear behaviour system and expectations in line with the rest of the school

## **7. Partnership with Parents/Carers**

We are approachable and supportive to our children and their families and are on hand to provide or signpost support around any concerns. We use the online platform 'Tapestry' to keep our parents updated on their child's learning experiences at school, share homework, newsletters and online learning tasks if needed. We also encourage our parents to share any news or experiences our children may have had at home.

As part of our spotlight planning, we ask parents to share any of the children's recent interests and activities as a tool to engage children in their learning during a focus week and share their completed learning journey with them on Tapestry.

We have engaged with parents in many ways to improve learning outcomes for their child and update them on ways to support their child at home. For example, Early Words Together (based on children's early literacy skills), Stay and Play sessions (Phonics, Maths, Creative etc), Reception new starters sessions. Parents are also invited into school/church for various celebrations including achievement assemblies, RE themes and talent shows.