

OLOL Early Years Foundation Stage Setting (EYFSS)

(Nursery and reception aged children working together)

Following a twelve-week consultation during the spring/summer of 2024 and a great deal of planning, preparation and research, in November 2024, we opened our doors to nursery children who joined our reception class setting. We are lucky to have ample space, both indoors and outdoors to cater for the children's needs, along with an additional room in the school that the EYFS pupils have access to. Families have often asked if we would consider nursery provision and so it was clear that there was a demand and we felt that the benefits were clear.



OLOL EYFSS
(Nursery & Reception)

What are the benefits of an EYFSS?

Children develop a secure sense of belonging in our setting from an early age and this can support the children in their transition both to reception and then to Y1. For the more able nursery children, they can access reception goals and those reception children who require consolidation in particular areas can access nursery goals.

The EYFS team get to know the children really well, especially if they spend two years in the setting, this supports the children's well-being and their learning. The team can develop an in-depth knowledge of the children and so become highly skilled in meeting their needs, this translates into excellent progress being made.

Some nurseries do not have access to qualified teachers, at Our Lady of Lourdes the children in our EYFS unit will benefit from having a qualified teacher to oversee the overall provision, ably supported by a team of qualified, experienced practitioners.

The EYFS curriculum is aimed at children from birth to 5 years, see further information via this link: [EYFS Statutory Framework](#), and so it lends itself to an EYFS setting in our school.

EYFS guidance continues to give practitioners some curriculum independence from KS1 (Y1 and Y2) and the top-down approach influenced by the demands put on the learning needs of older primary school children. This enables practitioners to develop 'responsive' planning in which children are allowed time and space to follow their own interests, uninterrupted by unhelpful timetabling demands such as playtimes and assemblies that may not best support the particular learning needs of three, four and five-year-olds.

If children are identified as having special educational needs, joining our school in nursery means we can identify those needs earlier and ensure appropriate support and funding is in place and secured.

Creating nursery places attracts additional funding for the school and so this benefits all children in many ways, e.g. resources, curriculum enrichment, staffing.

What are the staff ratios?

There will never be any more than 30 children in the EYFS unit and we adhere to the staffing ratios set out by the Department for Education. In practice, this equates to a **minimum** of one teacher and teaching assistant for the reception children and at least one level 3 practitioner or equivalent for the nursery children, we often exceed the minimum staffing requirements. Additional members of staff also work with those children who have special educational needs. The staff work as an EYFS team, led by the class teacher, to ensure that the children's needs are met, both academically and socially.

What does the day look like?

Children learn best in the EYFS when they are given the opportunity to follow their motivations and interests over extended periods of time. At Our Lady of Lourdes, we ensure that children engage regularly in long sessions of uninterrupted free-flow play, the staff are skilled in planning appropriate activities that are offered to the children, these are often linked to the children's interests. The nursery and reception children work alongside one another during these times and the staff are skilled at ensuring that the children's needs are met, whatever their ability and age. Free-flow play forms the majority of the school day and lends itself to both nursery and reception aged children working together.

Of course, there are also times when the children work in more focussed groups, for example when phonics is being delivered. During phonics teaching, children are grouped according to ability and so there is no doubt that the children are challenged appropriately and supported well. Other focussed groups may include topic work, maths work, opportunities for writing, etc... and staff target particular children at particular times, ensuring they progress in various areas of the curriculum from their individual starting points. Staff also work on a 1-1 basis or with small groups of children at different times of the day.

In addition to the main EYFS classroom and outdoor area, we have developed a further room in the school, known as the 'rainbow room'. This room offers the opportunity for children to work in small groups, away from the main EYFS provision and is particularly useful when staff are working on particular focus areas with small groups of children. Children also have access to our infant playground area and, when they are ready, are able to access this space too.

Planning for the children is responsive and collaborative, emanating from observations of the children's needs, interests and motivations matched to a sound knowledge of child development.

Nursery children have the option to attend either for half a day (8.45am - 11.45am), for a full school day (9am - 3.15pm) or for an extended day (8am - 6pm). If they stay for lunch, they bring their own packed lunch and eat together in the classroom. The reception children eat in the school hall and return to the classroom, or the infant playground.

We are mindful that it is essential that our plan is not at the expense of children's needs and entitlements and we are very aware of this. There are many unique aspects to quality nursery education and Reception-class teaching that we will not lose sight of, particularly in the current climate of narrow, target-driven expectations. By building on our sound, proven EYFS practice we hope to continue to develop our EYFSS that is true to the principles of good-quality early years provision and all children will benefit from this, whatever their age/stage of development.