



St Monica's Catholic Primary School

Philosophy

Every child is a unique gift from God, with his or her own unique gifts.

Our Catholic school, inspired by the teaching of Jesus Christ, will always endeavour to meet the needs of every child within our school.

At St. Monica's, we strive to ensure that all children and staff are offered the opportunity to develop to their full potential in individual, educational, moral, intellectual and spiritual needs.

Our Mission Statement is "Let Trust, Respect and Love live here."

What We Teach and What Your Children Learn in Early Years (EYFS) – Nursery and Reception

Please see below a summary of our plans for teaching and learning in Nursery and Reception at St Monica's.

If you want further information on the curriculum—including how it is tailored for children within classes who are at different stages of learning—please contact your child's teacher or email the school at stmonicas@st-monicas.co.uk.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the period of education from birth to 5 years. In our Foundation Stage, we have a school Nursery and two Reception classes.

Curriculum Intent

At St Monica's, we create a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment for all children in the EYFS. In line with the DfE and Ofsted guidance on building **strong foundations**, our curriculum is intentionally designed and carefully sequenced to ensure children build the essential foundational knowledge, skills, and vocabulary needed for long-term educational success.

We deliver engaging, meaningful topics to ensure that each child is seen as an individual whose unique needs are considered and planned for. Children are encouraged to be curious, confident, and resilient learners. We recognise that communication and language are the bedrock of all learning; therefore, we place a primary emphasis on developing skilful communicators by exposing children to rich experiences and ambitious vocabulary daily.

Staff account for children's prior learning and backgrounds when planning a curriculum that serves all learners. We offer high-quality learning through a balance of direct, adult-guided instruction and rich child-initiated play. This design supports children across all areas of development, particularly the prime areas of Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language, and Physical Development.

Our Core Aims:

- Work in close partnership with parents and carers to create a supportive, positive home-school link.
- Foster self-belief and high aspirations for every child across all aspects of learning.
- Promptly identify children with additional needs, including EAL and SEND, ensuring swift, targeted support so no child falls behind in core foundational skills.
- Maintain indoor and outdoor spaces that encourage exploration, independence, and active learning.
- Broaden children's understanding of the world through diverse, hands-on opportunities and systematic language exposure.
- Continuously develop staff practice in evidence-based early years pedagogy through internal professional development and external training.
- Explicitly model and teach key learning behaviours, such as attention, persistence, and self-regulation, to build independent, resilient learners ready for their next step.
- Support children in acquiring social, emotional, and practical skills that prepare them for Key Stage 1 and lifelong learning.

Curriculum Implementation

Our curriculum strictly follows the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, supported by *Development Matters* and evidence-informed practice from the DfE's *Strong Foundations* report.

Our indoor and outdoor learning environments are purposefully resourced to promote independence, deep exploration, and high-quality adult interactions.

Prime Areas of Learning

- **Communication and Language:** Highlighting oral composition, back-and-forth conversations, and language development.
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development:** Building confidence, self-regulation, empathy, and positive relationships.
- **Physical Development:** Focus on gross motor stability and core strength, leading sequentially to fine motor precision and pencil grip.

Specific Areas of Learning

- **Literacy:** Developing early reading through systematic synthetic phonics, love of stories, and early writing.
- **Mathematics:** Focusing on deep mastery of numbers to 10, subitising, pattern, and spatial reasoning.
- **Understanding the World:** Exploring cultures, nature, history, and modern technology.
- **Expressive Arts and Design:** Nurturing creativity, music, roleplay, and artistic expression.

As a Catholic school, **Religious Education** is an integral area of our early years curriculum, supporting children's spiritual and moral development.

High-Quality Adult Interactions: The ShREC Approach

We know that children learn best through strong, meaningful interactions with adults. Our team uses the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) ShREC approach to ensure every everyday conversation extends learning:

- Staff get down to the child's eye level, observe what has caught their interest, and join in sensitively with their play.
- Staff warmly acknowledge the child's verbal and non-verbal communication by commenting on what they are doing or feeling, avoiding unnecessary questioning.

- Staff repeat what the child says and build on it, adding new, descriptive vocabulary and modelling correct grammatical structures naturally.
- Staff sustain meaningful back-and-forth exchanges across multiple turns, giving children time to think, process, and articulate their ideas.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We actively scaffold and assess how children learn using the three statutory Characteristics of Effective Learning:

1. **Playing and Exploring:** Children investigate and experience things, demonstrating a willingness to 'have a go.'
2. **Active Learning:** Children concentrate, keep trying when they encounter difficulties, and take pride in their achievements.
3. **Creating and Thinking Critically:** Children develop their own ideas, make meaningful connections, and choose strategies to solve problems.

Assessment, Progression, and Inclusion

- **Sequenced & Progressive Curriculum:** Topics begin with engaging 'Stunning Starts' to capture curiosity, while learning steps are sequenced systematically to secure essential knowledge.
- **Targeted In-the-Moment Support:** Staff frequently observe children during play and guided teaching. We identify misconceptions in the moment to provide immediate support or extra challenge.
- **Practical Skills Grids:** Alongside EYFS profile tracking, staff use bespoke 'skills grids' to build and assess practical life skills. These are shared with parents each term to support learning at home.
- **Parental Engagement:** Parents stay connected through their child's online Class Dojo learning journal, alongside regular 'Stay and Play', 'Reading Cafes', and 'Stay and Pray' sessions in school.

Curriculum Impact

By the end of Reception, children leave the EYFS as confident, independent, and resilient individuals, well-prepared for a smooth transition into Key Stage 1.

What Our Children Achieve:

- **Strong Foundational Knowledge:** A secure grounding in early reading, mathematical fluency, and vocabulary that underpins all future academic learning.

- **Effective Learning Behaviours:** The ability to listen attentively, follow instructions, regulate emotions, and persist when tasks are challenging.
- **Self-Regulation & Independence:** Confidence to take safe risks, manage personal needs, and learn positively from mistakes.
- **Moral & Social Values:** A clear understanding of our school motto, **Trust, Respect, and Love**. demonstrated through good behaviour, empathy, and kindness to others.
- **Holistic Growth:** Strong academic, emotional, moral, and spiritual progress from their individual starting points.

Week	Advent 1	Advent 2	Lent 1	Lent 2	Pentecost 1	Pentecost 2
Topic	Marvellous Me	Rhyme Time	Tell me a story	Our Wonderful World	Amazing Animals	Summer's Here!
RE Branch	Creation and Covenant	Prophecy and Promise	Galilee to Jerusalem	Desert to Garden	To the ends of the earth	Dialogue and Encounter
1	Home visits/Settling sessions	Little Miss Muffet Incy Wincy Spider I hear thunder	Home visits/ Settling new intake Choosing our favourite story	Pirates	Pets	Light and Dark
	Settling Trust, Respect and Love	Nursery rhymes The rockets in the sky poem	The Little Red Hen	Set Sail!		
2	Getting to know you	5 Little speckled Frogs 2 Little Dickie Birds Wind the Bobbin Up	Goldilocks and the three bears	Space	Minibeasts	Healthy eating
	Starting school – My class	We see Autumn leaves poem	Little Red Riding Hood			
3	Faces and names	Doctor Foster Miss Polly 10 in a bed	Jack and the Beanstalk	Let's Grow	Farm animals	Let's Move! (Sports Day)
	Ourselves	Hospital Dog	The Enormous Turnip		Farming and Food	
4	My family	Hickory Dickory Dock Old MacDonald Baa baa black sheep	The three little pigs	People Who Help Us	Wild animals	What can you see? (Colours and patterns)
		Each peach, pear, plum	The three Billy Goat's Gruff			
5	Eyes	I'm a little teapot 5 Currant Buns Round and Round the Garden	The ugly Duckling	Easter	Under the water	Life's a Beach!
	My body, my senses	Oi Frog	The elves and the shoe maker			
6	Hands and feet	Advent/ Christmas	The Gingerbread Man	Easter	Dinosaurs	What a wonderful year!
	How have I changed?					
7	My favourite things	Advent/ Christmas				Time to say goodbye! Teddy Bear's picnic
	My likes and dislikes					
8	I am special					
	What am I good at?					