

Welcome to

Our Lady & St Benedict



Catholic Academy

Early Years  
Foundation Stage

# Welcome



It is a pleasure to welcome you to Our Lady & St Benedict Catholic Academy where we Love, Learn and Look forward with Christ. We are a Catholic school and proud to be part of the Newman Catholic Collegiate, which includes eight other schools. Choosing the right school for your child is a big decision and choosing a caring, happy and ambitious Early Years setting to give them the best possible start is incredibly important. Here at Our Lady & St Benedict we are committed to providing the very best Early Years experience for your child.

## **At Our Lady & St Benedict Catholic Academy we offer:**

- Full time Nursery places
- A Rising Threes programme that is available for children the term after they turn three
- A commitment to teaching the Catholic Faith
- A secure, happy and engaging indoor and outdoor environment
- A fantastic, modern outdoor space with many exciting opportunities to learn
- High standards and expectations for all children
- An open door policy and desire to form strong, positive relationships between staff and parents
- A team of enthusiastic and experienced teaching staff
- A varied and engaging curriculum that inspires children to explore and get involved

This information pack has been designed to let you know all about our Early Years Foundation Stage and show you all that our school has to offer.

**Mrs S Clowes**  
**Principal**

## Our Early Years

At Our Lady & St Benedict's we have a Nursery class and a Reception class. Both rooms are large, bright and safe spaces for the children to learn and are connected by a double door to allow the children to play and work together during the day.

We strive to make our Early Years a fun, exciting and engaging experience for all of the children. We plan for a range of different opportunities for learning, usually based around a theme and a book and support and encourage the children to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding throughout the day through taking part in varied exciting activities.



We have a large, recently build, outdoor area just for the Early Years children. Outdoor learning has many benefits for the children, including building their confidence, motor skills, social skills and self-esteem. So we are outside lots during the day, whatever the weather!

Through our facilities and planning we are able to provide every child with an enjoyable and highly engaging school experience.



The Early Years is an opportunity for children to really develop and secure the communication, social and physical skills they will need to succeed throughout their school journey. At Our Lady & St Benedict's we understand how important these first few years in school are and work hard to make sure that all of the children in our Early Years make excellent progress against all areas of our curriculum. We encourage the children to be independent and self-motivated learners who are resilient both academically and socially and want them to be fully prepared for their next steps by the time they leave us for Year One.

# Laying the Foundations



At Our Lady & St Benedict's we recognise that all children learn and develop in different ways and appreciate that all children are unique. We follow the Early Years Framework to help children learn and develop across all areas of the curriculum.

We plan for the children to learn through *playing and exploring*, being *active learners* and having opportunities to be *creative and think critically* about problem solving.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is split into seven areas of learning:

## The Prime Areas

- Communication & Language
- Personal, Social & Emotional Development
- Physical Development

## The Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Physical Development

It is important that we help the children to make progress against all seven of these areas in order to give them the strongest educational foundations and the best possible start to their school life.

# A Typical Day in Early Years

Our day always starts with a smile and a big welcome into school.

We start each day with breakfast, a Mind Up session, to get us focussed and ready to learn, and a prayer. We will often go to assembly, singing practice or Mass with the rest of the school, before returning to our class for lessons.

During the day we will always do phonics, maths and reading and will cover all areas of the curriculum during the week. We also dedicate time each week to our Catholic learning. We learn a lot through play opportunities and completing self-chosen activities throughout the day. These are thoughtfully selected and set out by the Early Years team.

At lunch we will all eat together - children and staff - and enjoy a social meal time. We will also use this time to help the children to develop their skills with a knife and fork and hopefully try some new food.

At the end of the day we will have fruit, milk and a story time before sharing a final prayer and our accomplishments from the day.

Not all days will be like this though! We have a range of further experiences and opportunities for the children throughout the Early Years. Including forest learning, educational visits to a variety of locations, reward days and celebrating special occasions, such as Book Day and celebrating Christmas through the Nativity. We also have regular visits from a range of people from TV entertainers to local police officers and mini-beast handlers.



# What Our Children Say

We asked our children about what they thought about school:

*"I like my teacher because she always teaches us. She teaches us to be nice and to be kind."*

*"I like singing 'Hosanna in the Highest' for God and Jesus and Father Adrian in Mass."*

*"I like to learn reading in school, I like reading with Miss and answering questions."*

*"I like forest school because we looked at what was in the pond using buckets and my favourite part was when we looked for plants that you can eat that are good for you."*

*"My favourite thing was when I was four and I was dressed as Joseph and we got on the stage and did the story about Christmas and Baby Jesus."*

*"I like doing activities and phonics because it helps you to be smart and read books."*

*"I like school because it is fun".*

*"We got the chicks out and picked them up, they tickled us. It was at Easter, when Jesus was on the cross."*

*"We learn phonics because it teaches us how to read and write."*

*"I love my friends because they are kind to me, like Jesus. Jesus said to love every because he loved everyone."*



# Rising Threes

In the Summer Term we run a Rising Threes Programme for children who have turned three before the Easter holidays. This is a fantastic opportunity for children to start their school journey a little bit earlier and to get to know and enjoy the Early Years before September.

This can be for either 15 hours a week or full time dependent on your circumstances.

We also run a number of Stay and Play sessions for children before they join us full time in September.

For more details on Rising Threes or the Stay and Play sessions, please get in touch.

## Meet the Staff

### Early Years Teachers

Mrs McCue  
Nursery Teacher / Early Years Lead



Miss Medgyesy  
Reception Teacher



# Early Years Teaching Assistants

Mrs Cotton  
Nursery Teaching Assistant



Mrs Franklin  
Reception Teaching Assistant



Miss Savage  
1-1 Teaching Assistant



Miss Bird  
Reception Teaching Assistant



# Loving, Learning & Looking Forward with Christ



You can contact Our Lady and St Benedict on  
01782 234646, or you can visit the school website.

We look forward to welcoming you and working with you  
and your child.

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Academy**