



*Loving learning and loving one another, as God loves us.  
Celebrating success in its many forms and overcoming challenges.  
Praying for and caring for our whole community.  
Living in the light of Christ and as a light to others.*



# Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

## Aims of the policy

- To explain how we meet the current (September 2021) requirement of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- To ensure a consistent approach where parents/carers and staff work together to give children the best possible start

## Rationale

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. The early years of a child's life are crucial to their development as individuals and to successful future learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to five years. At St John's Meads, we have one Reception class of 4-5 year olds.

## Our Approach

Our provision and practice is shaped by the four guiding principles of the Statutory Framework:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time.
- Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.
- The importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

## Our Curriculum Intent

At St John's Meads School, we provide our children with a curriculum that is designed to be flexible, engaging and exciting so that the children's unique needs, passions and interests are embraced. We thrive in developing a love of stories and a passion for reading! At St John's, we believe communication and language is vital in allowing all pupils to have a voice and confidence to express their feelings, thoughts and opinions. We therefore have a huge focus in developing our children's oracy skills. We are proud to work closely with our children's families right from the beginning to allow a seamless transition into the St John's family and build positive relationships with their year 6 'buddies'. Every child is an exceptional individual and we celebrate and respect differences within our diverse school community. The ability to learn is underpinned by the teaching of basic skills, knowledge and values that equips our children for their future



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successes. We inspire our children to become accomplished, happy individuals, ready to reach their full potential in an ever-changing world.

Our EYFS curriculum is driven to recognise children's prior learning and experiences (influenced by their home and community), provide first hand learning experiences, allow the children to develop interpersonal skills, build resilience through our 'Growth Mindset' approach and become critical and creative thinkers. We encourage our children to take risks, be brave and celebrate their mistakes as part of their learning journey.

## Unique Child

Our school rules are 'work hard', 'take care', and 'be kind'.

Within Early Years, these are exemplified in the following ways:

**Work Hard** – even play can be hard work! Children are taught to persevere through challenges and do their best.

**Take Care** – children share in the responsibility of looking after their classroom resources by using them in the right ways and tidying them away, so they don't get damaged or broken.

**Be Kind** - children are encouraged to share, take turns and have 'kind hands'. This is developed further as children begin to understand their place in the world and how we can help to look after the whole of God's creation.

## Transition

We offer a range of opportunities for children to experience elements of school prior to starting, including: a tour with their Year 6 Buddy, a visit to assembly, time in their new classroom with staff and a Teddy Bears' Picnic. Every new child receives a home visit from key staff. This supports the positive link between home and school. Parents/Carers share important information around needs, milestones/achievements, interests and routines. Wherever possible, we attend local network transition meetings or visit nurseries to share valuable information about each child to facilitate a smooth transition between settings.

## Child Initiated Learning

We provide a range of learning experiences, including opportunities for children to direct their own learning and follow their own interests. Children's interactions with the environment, resources and one another are observed and incorporated into future opportunities as appropriate – sometimes this may involve planning further activities that link to their interests, at other times activities may be provided with the intention to draw a child away from repetitive play or limited interests to broaden their experiences. Each child has a 'Learning Portfolio', a writing book and a profile on 'Tapestry' which captures their unique learning journey.



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## Positive Relationships

### Safeguarding and Welfare

*'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.'*

Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021

All children have the right to feel and be safe. The safety of our children is paramount. We encourage children to take risks in a safe learning environment by helping them to recognise and avoid hazards. For example, learning how to use the play equipment (climbing on/jumping off), how to carry and use tools such as scissors.

We ensure that our practice and provision complies with the welfare requirements as stated in the Ofsted Statutory Framework for EYFS. Our team collaborate to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of all children
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- Ensure adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- Ensure the premises, furniture, and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience tailored to their needs

### The Prevent Duty

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015) places a duty on Early Years providers 'to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. We aim to build children's resilience to extremism by promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and by actively promoting fundamental British Values.

All our staff undertake recognised Prevent Training, providing them with an understanding of the general risks affecting young children, how to identify individual children who may be at risk and how to support them. Our procedures for protecting children are set out in our existing Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.



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## **British Values**

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs are implicitly embedded in the EYFS. We actively seek to promote these values through modelling behaviour, challenging stereotypes and behaviours that are not in line with these values and by ensuring that our children receive a rich and varied curriculum.

### *Democracy – making decisions together*

As part of the focus on self-confidence and self-awareness, as cited in Personal and Social Development:

- Staff ensure that children understand their own and others' behaviour and its consequences, and learn to distinguish right from wrong.

### *Individual Liberty: freedom for all*

As part of the focus on self-confidence and self-awareness and people and communities, as cited in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Understanding of the World:

- Children are supported to develop a positive sense of themselves. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities, for example through allowing children to take risks through using large play equipment for climbing and balancing, mixing colours, reviewing their Learning Portfolios and talking about their experiences and learning.
- Staff help children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility through the Zones of Regulation, to reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions, for example in a small group discuss what they feel about transferring to the next phase/class.

### *Mutual respect and tolerance: treat others as you want to be treated*

As part of the focus on people and communities, managing feelings and behaviour, and making relationships, as cited in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Understanding the World:

- Staff create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths, cultures and races are valued and children are engaged with the wider community.
- Children explore similarities and differences between themselves and others and among families, faiths, communities, cultures and traditions and share and discuss practices, celebrations and experiences.
- Staff promote diversity by providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping.



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## Key Person

We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. A Key Person approach provides a reciprocal relationship between a member of staff, individual child and their family. Families are given clear guidance on the staff they will meet and their role in the school.

**The role of a Key Person** is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. They will know the child and support their sense of identity and individuality. They will be aware of the child's and family's needs, preferences and development. They will provide first aid as needed, and any support with toileting and changing (intimate care). They will welcome the child into the setting and help the child to settle into the session.

In our Reception class, the primary Key Person is the Teaching Assistant, as they fulfil these elements of this role through daily contact with parents and their availability for pastoral support and personal care. However, they share all relevant information with the class teacher who has overall responsibility for each child's learning and development.

## Enabling Environments

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. In addition to their classroom environment, all children have access to an outdoor classroom which is adapted to meet children's emerging needs. At designated times we offer children the choice to **'free flow'** between indoor and outdoor learning spaces.

There is a further area for physical development such as riding bikes and a planting area. Children have daily access to the main playground with climbing equipment and access the school field for some PE and Forest School activities.

**We believe that clear expectations and boundaries, within age appropriate routines and structures are paramount to enabling children to feel safe and secure and in facilitating the positive social and learning behaviours which are essential to successful learning and social interactions; we organise our provision based on this premise.**

During the day, children participate in short periods of shared learning (carpet time) led by an adult, followed by periods of more active learning through a range of activities (self-directed challenges alongside structured adult-led learning experiences). Children are encouraged to make choices about their learning activities and to be independent and creative in how they engage with resources. Adults extend children's play and interaction as appropriate and use their observations to enhance future provision and extend learning.



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## Curriculum

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are 'Prime Areas', and four are 'Specific Areas'.

Prime Areas	Specific Areas
Communication and language	Literacy
Physical development	Mathematics
Personal, social and emotional development	Understanding of the world
	Expressive arts and design

The Prime Areas are essential for fostering early learning skills and are promoted heavily through our planning and provision. Successful mastery of these skills supports children to achieve well in Specific Areas of Learning.

Curriculum Mapping is in place to promote a wide ranging curriculum where children are challenged with new experiences. It is made up of a range of broad themes and across all of these we promote the Characteristics of Effective Learning where children develop their abilities to play and explore, take an active role in their learning and think creatively.

## Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We promote positive relationships and parental involvement through:

- Home visits prior to starting the setting
- Taster sessions (with parents)
- Encouraging parent helpers/reading partners
- Communication via regular Weduc posts
- Regular opportunities throughout the year to encourage collaboration, such as class assemblies, performances (e.g Nativity), stay and play sessions and open afternoons
- Formal meetings for parents/carers at which the Class Teacher and parent discuss the child's progress.
- Sharing curriculum plans on our website that cover topics we will teach during that term



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## Assessment

“Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children’s progress, understand their needs and to plan activities and support”

*Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021*

The Development Matters Bands and Early Learning Goals provide the basis for assessment throughout the EYFS. Practitioners, teachers and teaching assistants make regular assessments of children’s learning and these high quality observations are key to the assessment and planning cycle. Further learning opportunities are planned in response to these.

- Summative assessment takes place termly. This is used to identify children who need intervention.
- A Good Level of Development measure is made at the end of the Reception Year. This is used to inform transition to Year 1.

## Phonics

We have chosen ‘Jolly Phonics’ as our validated synthetic phonics scheme. Jolly Phonics is a multi-sensory approach to the teaching of phonics, incorporating stories/characters, pictures, songs and actions into the learning of letters and sounds. This approach compliments St John’s Meads’ approach in other areas, including our strength in singing and music, our work to develop speech and language (including the use of Makaton sign), and the Talk 4 Writing approach used in English lessons.

See [Phonics and Early Reading Policy](#)

## Learning and Development

### Learning and Development:

We recognise that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. At St John’s Meads we understand that young children achieve well when learning is engaging and well matched to their interests and previous learning.

### Inclusion in the Foundation Stage/Special Educational Needs and Disability

All children and their families are valued at our school. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provision available. All children are encouraged to achieve their full potential and planning is in response to the observed needs of all groups and abilities.

Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special educational needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and further support can be accessed through our SENCO/Assistant Headteacher Mrs Cork.



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We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children so that they make good progress from their starting points. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of different genders, faiths, social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, special educational needs and disabilities. In order to accommodate an individual's particular learning needs, provision will be planned wherever possible in a multi-sensory way so that the various experiences can be accessed by all in the spirit of inclusion.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

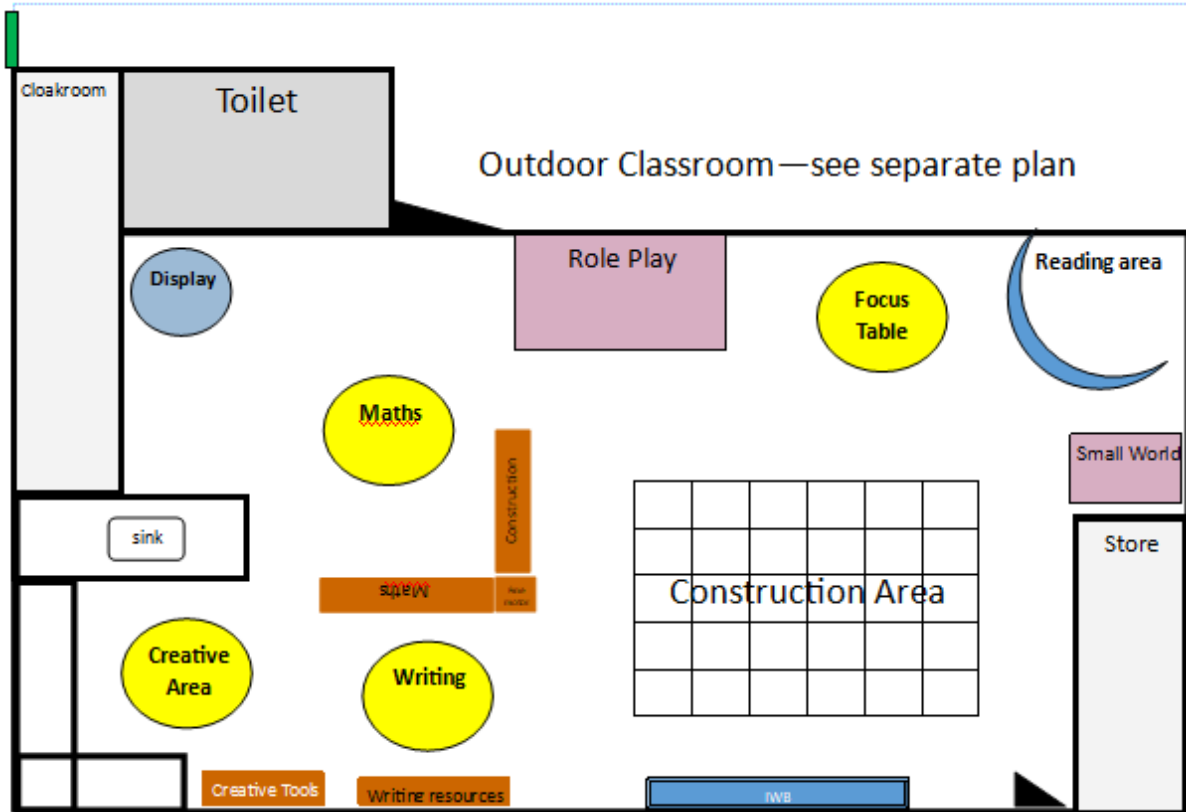
- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

## **Pupil Premium**

We ensure that we identify children who are entitled to Pupil Premium and rigorously track their progress and achievement. Through baseline and ongoing assessment, we are able to identify areas to provide additional support for individual pupils. Our spending of pupil premium funding is documented, and the impact is assessed, in line with statutory requirements and is published on our website



Appendix 1 – Indoor room plan



Appendix 1 – Outdoor room plan

