



**St James' C of E Primary School**  
**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY**  
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**To be Reviewed: September 2024**



**'Inspiring and Growing for Fullness of Life'** is the vision that underpins all that we strive to do at St. James' C of E Primary School; it is embedded within our ethos and philosophy shaping our spiritual growth. Developing, supporting and nurturing children to fulfil this vision is integral to all we do.

**St James' C of E Primary School provides the highest quality education within the context of caring Christian beliefs and practices; in partnership with St Philip and St James Church. St James is a creative, nurturing and inclusive community, shaped by our vision for spiritual growth and our Christian values. Children of any faith or none, are given the opportunity to develop their own spirituality; valuing wisdom, growing in hope, showing respect and exploring big questions.**

## **Introduction**

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.'

*(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2021)*

Our Aim is to weave together our Spiritual Wheel and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework to enable our children to grow for 'Fullness of Life', equipping them with the skills to become life-long learners and prepare them for the next stage in their education.

Early years education is the foundation upon which the children build the rest of their lives and is an education that encompasses all learning. At St. James' we greatly value the importance that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the EYFS at our school. The overall aims of this policy are to ensure consistency in teaching and learning and classroom organisation in the Foundation Stage. The policy reflects the consensus of opinion of the teaching staff and has the support and agreement of the governing body. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all members of staff.

The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At St. James' C of E Primary School children are admitted to Reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

### **1. Aims**

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

At St James', we aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

We will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds upon what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

## **2. Legislation**

This policy is based on requirements set out in the EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers that applies from January 2024.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS\\_statutory\\_framework\\_for\\_group\\_and\\_school\\_based\\_providers.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf)

## **3. Structure of the EYFS**

At St. James' C of E Primary, the structure of our EYFS comprises of a Reception unit, covering the Reception year of the EYFS framework, with a cohort of up to 60 children. Children join the setting in small groups during our transition period in September, and are then allocated a class base when they start school on a full-time basis.

We operate a free flow set up across the entire setting, including continual access to the inside and outdoor classrooms.

## **Early Years Foundation Stage Principles**

The EYFS is based upon four principles or themes:

- The Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

### **The Unique Child**

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.

### **Positive Relationships**

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and our aim is to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Enabling Environments**

We also believe that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning. We also plan and consider the learning environment. The Foundation Stage unit is organized to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where children can be active or be quiet and rest. The unit is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

## **4. Curriculum**

At St. James', our curriculum is built around the educational programmes and requirements as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021, and guided by Development Matters (2021). Our children are at the heart of our curriculum, which is led by their interests and needs, and provides a top-level plan of everything we want our children to learn (see Reception Curriculum Goals), which is appropriate and unique to the children in our care.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, three areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

### **4.1 Planning**

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. Initially our focus is strongly on the three Prime Areas of learning, ensuring a firm foundation in these areas and aspects on which to build on.

Staff also focus on individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

## 4.2 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a careful balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

### The Importance of Play

At St. James' we do not make a distinction between work and play. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play.

### The Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**. At St. James' we plan activities within the classroom and outdoor area with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three Characteristics of Effective Learning are:

- **Playing and Exploring:** children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning:** children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically:** children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

For further information about Curriculum and Curriculum design, please refer to our EYFS Learning Pledge, curriculum and vision documents.

## 5. Assessment

Formative assessment is an integral part of teaching young children. Children's development and learning is best supported by starting from the child, and then matching interactions and experiences to meet the child's needs. The observation, assessment and planning (OAP) cycle describes what is frequently called assessment for learning, or formative assessment. At St. James', on-going formative assessment is at the heart of our early years practice. It involves observation of children as a part of all activity, which is most often held in the mind of the practitioner but may sometimes be documented, using this rich information to understand how a child is developing, learning and growing, and then planning the next steps for the adults in supporting and extending the learning and shape future planning.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). During this time, we also complete our own observation-based baseline which covers all areas of learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage, making judgements against our September Check points.

Summative assessment involves stepping back to gain an overview of children's development and progress and grows out of formative assessment. We track each child's progress at three key points during the year, making a Point In Time judgement, of whether a child is on track to meet the Early Learning Goals for each area by the end of the year, based on agreed check points. Our professional judgements are based on a holistic view of a child's development and learning.

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools, and schools within the Academy, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Alongside staff, parents are encouraged to contribute to this process by initially completing our Home to School transition record and through discussions held at home visits. Parents are given opportunities throughout the year, such as at Parents' Evenings and drop-in sessions, to share and make comments in their child's learning journey about their learning and development. They are also given WOW vouchers to record significant events that happen at home or out of school and these are then shared and celebrated in school. Each child's learning journey is given to them as they leave the Reception Year.

## 6. Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers. We believe that forming good relationships can contribute to creating a happy and effective learning environment for young children.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development through a variety of ways. Two parents' evenings are scheduled throughout the year, one in the second part of the Autumn term and one in the Spring term. Mid-term reports are also sent to parents in February and a final school report is given at the end of June. This provides parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a key person (the class teacher) who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

### **Admission**

All children are admitted into school during the first two weeks of the school year, initially on a part-time basis. There is a staggered admission system to full-time education which is explained in detail in the School Admission Policy. Parents are invited to discuss any concerns they may have about their child beginning full time education; arrangements for which can be flexible.

### **7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures**

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years through our use of the SCARF curriculum, including our visit to the Life Education Bus, and by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of those working in Reception to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and EYFS lead will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Curriculum Committee of The Governing Body will also be part of this process. This policy will be reviewed in September 2023 or as necessary.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment and Record Keeping Policy
- P.E. Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Early Help Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Health and Safety Policy