



**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**St. John's Walham Green C of E Primary School**

**Last reviewed and approved: October 2015**

**Next review date: September 2018**

## **Introduction**

*‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.’*

*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE 2014*

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) usually applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. At St John’s Walham Green CE Primary School, children join either in the Nursery, after their third birthday or in Reception at the beginning of the school year in which they turn five. The EYFS is recognized as an important phase of a child’s life as it lays out a secure foundation and prepares children for future learning.

This policy sets out the school aims, principles and strategies for education across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It will form the basis for the development of the EYFS for the next three years.

## **The Early Years Foundation Stage**

The EYFS applies to children from the ages of three to five years old. The children are grouped by age in either a Nursery or Reception class. The EYFS is important in its own right, as well as preparing children for later schooling.

We acknowledge that children joining our school join with a range of experiences. The educational provision we provide is based on the following principles:

- It builds on 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 activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment

## **Organisation of the EYFS**

There are 86 spaces available in the EYFS – one Nursery class of 26 pupils and two Reception classes of 30 places each. Each class has a qualified teacher and member of support staff, Early Years Educators (EYE) or Teaching Assistant (TA).

### *Nursery*

During the autumn term, there are two groups. We have one full-time group of 13 pupils and one part-time group of 13 children. Pupils are grouped by age. Part-time pupils attend from 8.55-11.55am and full-time pupils attend from 8.55am-3.25pm. All pupils attend 5 days a week. During the spring and summer terms all Nursery pupils attend full-time.

## *Reception*

All Reception pupils attend full-time, five days a week.

### **The curriculum**

The Nursery and Reception classes follow the curriculum as outlined in the 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage' document. The document includes three Characteristics of Learning and seven Areas of Learning and Development.

The Characteristics of Learning are:

- Playing and Exploring
  - *engagement*
- Active Learning
  - *motivation*
- Creating and Thinking
  - *thinking*

The Prime Areas are:

- Communication and Language
  - *Listening and attention*
  - *Understanding and speaking*
- Physical Development
  - *Moving and handling*
  - *Self care*
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
  - *Making relationships*
  - *Managing feelings and behaviour*
  - *Self-confidence and self-awareness*

The Specific Areas are:

- Literacy
  - *Reading*
  - *Writing*
- Mathematics
  - *Numbers*
  - *Shape, space and measures*
- Understanding the World
  - *People and communities*
  - *The world*
  - *Technology*
- Expressive Arts and Design
  - *Exploring and using media*
  - *Being imaginative*

## **Teaching and learning**

We endeavour to ensure that there is a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities across the day. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. By the summer term in Reception, the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to Year 1.

Learning through play is an important part of learning in our Early Years setting. We believe that children learn best from activities and experiences that interest them. Children's interests are used as a starting point for planning activities. Adult-led activities are carefully planned to help children learn specific skills and knowledge.

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. This looks quite different in the Nursery and Reception classrooms. We set aside time each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on maths, literacy, phonics and topic work. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns, sitting still etc.

Staff plan in detail on a weekly basis using daily notes, observations and interactions with children to inform where the learning journey should move on to. Although class teachers are responsible for writing plans, the EYFS plan as a team, with teachers, support staff and student teachers all attending planning meetings and giving an input where possible.

## **Play in the Foundation Stage**

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build upon ideas, learn how to control their actions and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children, as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

## **Visits and visitors**

We believe that 'learning goes beyond the classroom'. Our curriculum is enriched with visits and visitors.

Visits are both local and further afield. We actively seek parental and carer support on trips, aiming for a ratio of 1:5. For safety reasons we say no to younger siblings accompanying adult helpers on school trips.

Visitors are viewed as experts that come in to school to share knowledge or skills. Visitors may include family members or professionals, such as the school nurse, a police officer etc.

## **Classroom organisation**

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set-up to provide children with experiences and activities that reflect all seven areas on the curriculum. Classrooms have a writing area, maths area, creative area, book corner, role-play area, construction area, teaching table and carpeted area for whole class teaching. There is a communal outdoor learning environment, which is directly accessible from the Nursery classroom and a short distance from both Reception classrooms. All teaching areas are well supervised. Adults can be found either active in leading a taught activity or moving around the setting supporting and extending children's learning experiences.

The outdoor learning environment is considered an extension of the internal classroom. An emphasis is placed on ensuring that there are a range of activities that reflect the space available and the opportunities provided by the natural environment.

Emphasis is placed on pupils having ownership over their surroundings. Each pupil has his or her own labelled peg. Reception pupils share a drawer. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for keeping their classroom tidy and ensuring that clothing, book bags and work are put away correctly.

## **Resources**

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflects both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of activities on offer as we believe this encourages independent learning.

## **Assessment, observations and portfolios**

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. Future learning opportunities are then shaped to reflect those observations.

A range of evidence reflecting the children's experiences and learning are gathered together in their individual learning portfolios. This includes children's work, photographs and written observations. Where appropriate, individual next steps are included. Next steps are discussed during informal meetings after school each day and in the weekly planning meeting.

Parents are encouraged to contribute to learning journals by filling in 'Magic Moment' forms and by sending in photographs or examples of work. Portfolios are shared during parents' evenings and are available for pupils to access in class.

On entry to Nursery and Reception a baseline assessment is carried out. An external baseline assessment provider is used. Class teachers enter data at the end of each term. At the end of the academic year, Reception teachers assess each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals and comment on whether their development is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding' against each ELG. This information is reported to Reception parents through the end of year report in the summer term.

## **Inclusion**

At St. John's we believe that all of our children matter. We give them every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of the children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children so that most children achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) by the end of the key stage. Some pupils progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of various groups, which includes boys and girls, children with special education needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all of our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem
- Providing and 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 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
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support where necessary
- Providing individual Support Plans (ISPs) where appropriate to meet the differing strengths and needs of each individual child

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### *The Governors*

- To ensure the EYFS is an integral part of the School Development Plan
- The Curriculum Committee, and in particular the assigned governor, to monitor all aspects of EYFS practices
- The Finance Committee to agree to funding in line with the Annual Action Plan/School Development Plan

### *The Head of School*

- To overview EYFS provision in the school
- To ensure that budget allocations reflect the needs of the EYFS department
- To ensure that all practitioners in the EYFS undergo safeguarding training on an annual basis

### *Foundation Stage Leader*

- To monitor EYFS provision across all three classes and report to the Head of School and Governors
- To monitor that safe practices and routines are in place in regard to children's daily welfare and that they are in line with the school's safeguarding policy
- To ensure that a broad curriculum is provided that encompasses British Values
- To implement government guidelines and other initiatives and to keep all staff up to date with current practice
- To support colleagues and liaise with members of staff with reference to timetabling, resources and funding
- To liaise with outside agencies where necessary
- To induct new members of staff in regard to all EYFS practices

### *Class teachers*

- To plan a wide range of activities that help children to make good progress towards (and where appropriate beyond) the Early Learning Goals
- To draw on a range of teaching strategies, ideas and equipment to provide the children with a broad and balanced curriculum
- To encourage the children to participate in many learning opportunities, both child-initiated and teacher-led
- To use assessments to inform planning on a weekly basis
- To maintain up to date records on all children
- To form effective relationships with parents and communicate regularly with them
- To review progress and report to parents three times a year, formally and at other times if necessary
- To pass all records to the next class teacher
- To identify individual provision for children with specific interests or needs
- To monitor each child's achievement so that any Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are identified at the earliest time, and subsequently address these needs
- To identify details of deployment of other adults in the class on plans and communicate the necessary intentions clearly
- To discuss targets with children and encourage them to identify their achievements and future targets
- Celebrate individual and group successes and be aware of the importance of positive praise to raise children's self-esteem

### *Support Staff*

- To support the class teachers in all of the above

### **Key workers**

All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive and respectful relationships with the children in their care. The forming of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes.

In Nursery the class teacher and support staff are allocated as a key worker to individual pupils. In Reception, the class teacher is the named key worker for each child in their class. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, support learning development and build a relationship with their parents.

Important aspects of a key worker responsibilities include:

- Developing secure trusting relationships with key children and their parents/carers
- Providing a secure base for key children by supporting their interests
- Comforting distressed children by acknowledging their feelings, offering explanations and reassurances calmly and gently
- Acknowledging and allowing children to express a range of feelings
- Settling new children into the setting (whenever possible settling key children as they arrive each day)
- Whenever possible eating with key children during lunch times
- Keeping records of key children's developmental progress, contributing observations to records kept by colleagues and sharing records with parents/carers
- Observing key children and analyse the information gathered through observation
- Planning experiences for individual children based on observations of their interests and developmental stages
- Contributing to writing reports for parents/carers and hold regular meetings to discuss progress
- Communicating with parents/carers regularly

### **Partnership with parents and carers**

We believe that children benefit most from Early Years Education and care when parents, settings and services work together in partnership. Practitioners work in partnership with parents and carers and external agencies to meet the needs of the children and families, both individually and as a group.

The Early Years settings aim to achieve this by:

- Conducting home visits to families prior to admission (September entry) to enable children to become meet key staff in the familiarity of their own home

- Ensuring that arrangements for settling in are flexible enough to give time for children to become secure and for practitioners, parents and carers to discuss each child's experiences, interests, skills and needs
- Encouraging parents/carers to share information regarding the family background and culture. The knowledge and expertise of parents/carers and other family members are used to support the learning opportunities provided by the setting
- Providing a variety of formal and informal opportunities for parents and carers to meet practitioners/key workers on a regular basis to ensure that they are kept fully informed about their child's progress e.g. Open Evenings, Special Books, informal meetings etc.
- Encourage all parents/carers to contribute to and participate in activities in the school
- Parents/carers are encouraged to work in partnership with the EYFS team to teach their child to show respect and care for resources in the setting
- Damage to resources incurred because of intentional misuse must be addressed with the parent/carer by the class teacher in the first instance and then reported to the appropriate school leader

### **Health and safety & safeguarding**

We believe that children learn best when they feel safe and secure, are healthy, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014) [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf)

All members of the school staff attend an annual safeguarding training session.

#### *Health Medical Conditions*

The schools promote the good health of children attending the settings by encouraging healthy practices in everyday life. The schools' policy on Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions should be read alongside this policy as it provides a detailed description of procedures which are followed in event of required medical support for individual pupils.

#### *Healthy Eating*

- Healthy eating is promoted as part of the curriculum.
- Drinking water is available to the children at all times.
- Parents/carers are asked to inform school about children's dietary needs and any allergies
- Children should be involved in selecting and preparing healthy, balanced and nutritious snacks and drinks. Snacks are prepared in suitable and hygienic facilities.
- Parents/carers in the first instance are recommended school dinners as a healthy lunch option for their child. If selecting a packed lunch parent/carers

are informed about what constitutes a healthy packed lunch i.e. wholegrain sandwiches fruit, cheese and vegetables; sweets, sugary drinks, chocolates and crisps are strongly discouraged.

#### *Protecting Children from the Sun*

- Parents/carers are strongly encouraged to provide children with sun hats and sun screen and protective clothing during the summer months.
- Areas of shade are provided and children are encouraged to play in them
- Accident or Injury
- First Aid equipment is accessible at all times.
- A record is kept of accidents and injuries and the first aid treatment applied.
- Parents are notified about accidents or injuries on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable, of any first aid treatment given.

#### *Intimate Care*

- Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. Some children may need some support, for example, dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear and clothes following an accident.
- It is expected that the vast majority of children are able to independently use a toilet by the time they enter the Nursery and all children are encouraged to start school without nappies. The school will support children and families who are yet to reach this stage of development.
- Parents/carers should inform the school of children likely to require intimate care and agree a protocol with the school about how this care will be managed. The same procedure will be followed if staff identify a need of this nature.
- Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that home and school work in partnership to give the right support to an individual child.

#### *Safeguarding and Child Protection*

- All practitioners are alert to signs of possible abuse and neglect. Practitioners are trained to understand the schools' Safeguarding in Schools policy and receive annual training in local or topical issues.
- Staff sign the schools' Acceptable Use Agreement which includes a clause on the use of mobile phones / personal equipment for taking pictures of pupils.
- Practitioners do however use iPads, cameras and other recording devices which are registered to the school to record evidence of children's learning. Many of these are used in children's special books and profiles, class displays and on the schools' websites. All parents/carers are asked for permission to take and use pupil images on admission to school.

#### *Suitable People*

- All practitioners and volunteers who work in the EYFS have been subject to the relevant checks before working in the setting.

### *Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment*

The setting provides a range of furniture, equipment and materials that will meet the varying needs of children. Practitioners continuously review and develop the resources available, with consideration of the principles of the EYFS.

- The EYFS premises are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of the children attending the setting.
- Emergency procedures are in place, in line with the schools' Health and Safety policy
- The building and grounds are kept secure at all times β Smoking is not permitted on the schools' premises
- Health and Safety checks are carried out daily, indoors and outdoors, to ensure the premises are maintained in a suitable state of repair and decoration.
- Toys and equipment comply with safety standards and are routinely cleaned and checked for damage before and after use.
- Fixed apparatus, large equipment and wheeled toys are checked and maintained regularly.
- Practitioners regularly review, through risk assessments, the resources available to assess their value and develop the quality of activities and materials available.
- The variety of equipment, books and resources promotes positive images of all children and families using the school and the local community.
- Children have sufficient choice and quantity of equipment to allow them to develop their own ideas.
- Suitable storage facilities are provided so equipment can be accessed by children and tidied away after use.

### **Transition**

Practitioners will aim to:

Ensure a smooth transition for children from Nursery to Reception and Reception to Year 1. Smooth transitions are supported by:

1. Effective communication between teachers on each side of the transition
  - Transition meetings between relevant staff take place in the Summer Term to share information about each child's learning and development.
2. Parental engagement
  - Home visits for new families to the settings.
  - Welcome packs given to all parents to inform them about the setting and key information they need to know to support their child.
  - Open days to invite parents into the setting, to meet the staff and address any questions they may have.
  - Parent information meetings before the start of Reception.
  - Consultations with parents/carers about the best way to settle their child into a new environment.

3. Familiarity
  - Visits to the new setting.
  - Visits from staff to setting.
  - Taking part in whole school activities such as singing assembly (Reception-Y1).
  - Reception children join lunch time and play times on the school playground
  
4. Focus on both continuity and progression
  - Sharing of personal information about the child e.g. preferred name, likes/dislikes etc.
  - Shared understanding of the EYFS and National Curriculum.
  - Clear communication between staff, particularly Reception and Year 1 practitioners, to ensure that levels of progress and attainment are moderated and next steps planning appropriately meets pupil needs.

### **Complaints**

Should pupils or their parents/carers be dissatisfied they should discuss their concerns with the school following the communication procedure (details available on the schools' websites). If, for whatever reason, this does not resolve the issue, they may make a formal complaint following the Complaints Procedure which is available on the schools' websites or in hard copy from the school office.

### **Documents working alongside the EYFS Policy**

This includes:

- Supporting Pupils With Medical Conditions policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policy
- Behaviour policy
- E Safety protocol
- Health and Safety Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Complaints Procedure