

St John's C of E VA First School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



'Together we will give our children the roots to grow and the wings to fly.'

This policy should be taken as part of St. John's C. of E. First School's overall strategy and is implemented within the context of our vision of Government aims and our values as a Church of England School.

Review

Review Cycle	Date of Current Policy	Author(s) of Current Policy	Review Date
	01.06.2026	Katherine Llewellyn, Teresa Gilbert, Nicole Simenton	September 2027

Ratification

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of Governors	Jack Hill		
Head Teacher	Teresa Gilbert and Nicole Simenton		
DSL	Teresa Gilbert and Nicole Simenton		

Details of Policy Updates

Date	Details

Our EYFS Aims and Vision

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we start our children off on their St. John's journey and give all children the roots to grow and the wings to fly. We create a happy, nurturing and imaginative environment where children feel safe, known and valued. We build a love of learning where each child's interests and unique qualities are shared, celebrated and nurtured. We introduce the children to our outdoor areas and school grounds, St. John's Church and our immediate local area. Through strong partnerships with families and rich experiences that spark curiosity and independence, we help every child to grow and thrive, both in our classroom, outdoor areas and in the world beyond.

A child entering our Reception class at St. John's CE VA First School embarks on a creative learning adventure where curiosity shapes each day. Our environment is rich in hands-on experiences, giving children time and space to explore, imagine and discover. Independence is encouraged and risk-taking is celebrated within safe and supportive surroundings. We support and encourage children to develop positive relationships and friendships with each other. We strive to ensure that every child grows, shines and feels they belong so they can achieve their very best, every single day.

We recognise that children learn best when they feel safe, valued and when staff have a shared knowledge of their previous experiences and interests. To achieve this, we work in close partnership with parents/carers, valuing the shared knowledge and insight that families can provide. Together, we build consistent relationships that help each child to thrive socially, emotionally and academically. We take the time to get to know each child and understand their individual needs. We recognise that secure attachments support language development, emotional regulation, attention and resilience.

Our carefully planned activities offer rich learning opportunities to play, explore ideas, collaborate, and apply new skills. Through this, we aim to develop the whole child, supporting academic progress, emotional resilience and social confidence so they can flourish within our reception classroom and in the next steps of their journey into key stage one and beyond.

The EYFS standards seek to provide:

- Quality and consistency so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- A secure foundation through planning for learning and development of each individual child and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- Partnership working between teachers and support staff with parents and/or carers.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Our Learning and development requirements cover:

• The EYFS areas of learning and development

These outline the key areas that shape the activities, experiences and opportunities provided for all children.

The Early Learning Goals (ELGs)

- These set out the knowledge, skills and understanding that children should achieve by the end of the reception year. Our role is to support children in working towards these goals through high-quality teaching and learning experiences.

The EYFS is based on four guiding principles:

- **The Unique Child** – every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** – children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- **Enabling Environment** – 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 and/or carers.
- **Learning and Development** – children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

EYFS Objectives

- **Provide a safe, happy, nurturing environment** where calm, caring adults ensure all children feel secure, valued and supported, and where their individual needs and interests are recognised.
- **Create a calm, predictable and enabling environment** that offers rich, continuous and linked provision, encouraging exploration, curiosity and challenge within a consistent daily routine.
- **Promote warm, professional and trusting relationships** built on mutual respect and a sensitive understanding of each child's experiences, feelings and family background.
- **Nurture strong, supportive relationships** that help children learn, regulate emotions, and understand their own and others' feelings within a calm, consistent atmosphere.
- **Ensure high-quality, language-rich interactions** where adults model a shared communication, extend learning and actively embed new vocabulary through meaningful experiences.
- **Provide a broad, balanced curriculum** that equips all children with the best possible opportunities to enjoy learning and progress across all areas of development.
- **Support moral and social development** in line with the school's ethos, helping children understand right and wrong and develop respectful, positive relationships.
- **Encourage active, first-hand learning indoors and outdoors**, using both verbal and non-verbal communication to support children's engagement and understanding.
- **Develop motivated, independent learners** who show curiosity, resilience, confidence and a secure sense of self, supported by positive and predictable routines.
- **Embed physical activity throughout the day** to promote healthy development and support happy, active lifestyles.
- **Value and celebrate cultural diversity** within the school and wider community, helping children make sense of their physical world and their place within it.
- **Foster strong home-school partnerships**, ensuring a shared purpose, respected communication and open support. The class teachers act as the key person, with all support staff contributing to each child's care, development and learning.

The EYFS Areas of Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development: 3 Prime Areas and 4 Specific Areas. All areas are important and inter-connected:

Prime Areas

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

These three prime areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.

Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

These four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied

Foundational Skills

Foundational knowledge in the EYFS is built through strong, consistent teaching that secures early reading, writing, phonics, and handwriting skills.

Phonics

Phonics is taught through the **Read, Write Inc. phonics scheme**. With firm fidelity to the Read Write Inc, scheme, teachers and support staff provide clear, systematic teaching that builds children's knowledge step by step.

Right from the very start of Reception, we follow the 'Making a Strong Start' Read, Write Inc document to teach the phonic sounds systematically. We track children's phonic sound knowledge and their development of early reading skills in learning to 'Fred Talk' to read words. Our fully decodable reading books, sent home regularly, are carefully matched to the Read Write Inc. progression taught in differentiated phonics groups, ensuring that children practice and apply their growing phonics skills with confidence. We encourage and support parents/carers to be involved with their child's phonics and reading learning at home through sending home green phonic sound books, reading records to encourage reading at home and Read Write Inc videos on Seesaw to watch together at home. We have a phonics meeting at the start of Reception to share information with parents and/or carers about how we teach the Read Write Inc phonics scheme at St. John's and how children can be supported at home.

Handwriting

Handwriting is taught through the **Read Write Inc. Handwriting scheme**, enabling children to develop accurate letter formation alongside targeted fine motor activities such as Funky Fingers challenges, Dough Disco and Pen Disco. Letter formation is taught using the Read Write Inc. rhymes to support with letter formation. Children are taught to write letters alongside learning the letter sounds in phonics. We also teach handwriting during a daily handwriting session after lunch using the Read Write Inc 'jam and sponge' handwriting lines. Staff support children to use a tripod pencil grip through visuals, modelling and rhymes. We use stabile handwriting pencils to support children to use the tripod grip. The Read Write Inc scheme also supports children to sit in a comfortable position for writing.

Consistent approaches and familiar routines allow children to develop confidence, fluency, and independence in their early literacy skills. Staff are proactive in identifying any gaps in learning and use Read Write Inc phonic interventions and handwriting interventions to ensure that children laying the strongest possible foundations for future success.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

At St. John's VA C of E First School, we believe that the correlation between the well-being and social and emotional development of children has a significant impact on a child's development of key skills that enable us to become learners for life. We introduce the Zones of Regulation in the Reception classroom to support the children to explore and understand different emotions.

The skill to manage your thinking (engagement), the will to learn (motivation) and the thrill (excitement) all build upon a child's capacity for future learning.

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

Three characteristics of effective teaching and 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.

School Behaviour Expectations

We want our school to be a calm, safe and kind learning environment for all children and adults to thrive and enjoy being in. To this end, we have agreed the following expectations for all to follow:

- Ready
- Safe
- Kind

These expectations will be taught to the children when they start school and will be clearly evident through visual resources in the reception classroom. Reception teachers and support staff will model and teach the children what each expectation should look like:

Ready:

- Quality listening – looking and listening
- Resources ready to use
- Ready to learn
- Quality lining up – straight, silent, smart lines

Safe:

Wonderful walking – quiet, arms by side, holding doors open

- Careful play
- Tidy areas – classes, corridors, outdoor play equipment
- Always be in the right place

Kind:

- Kind words - please, thank you, sorry, good manners always
- Kind actions – kind hands and feet
- Listen to others – show respect
- Sharing

- Look after toys and equipment

The reception classroom will have the expectations displayed using Communicate in Print signs and photographs of the class showing the expectations to refer to daily. Staff will establish a calm, clear and consistent classroom routines to support every child.

Praise and Rewards

To promote and celebrate good behaviour the following acts of praise and rewards will be used in the reception classroom:

- Non-verbal praise; thumbs up, smile
- Verbal praise – specific language used to refer to the behaviour being shown
- House Points
- Collecting pom poms in a jar, linked to being Ready, Safe and Kind
- Stickers
- Star of the Day
- Kindness Awards
- Headteacher Awards

EYFS Planning

At St. John's VA C of E First School, we use **Development Matters**—the non-statutory curriculum guidance for the EYFS—as a key support resource when planning and delivering high-quality early years learning. Our EYFS Curriculum Overview Planning document breaks down skills and knowledge into carefully sequenced steps. This ensures that children's learning builds progressively and coherently across EYFS. Adult lead activities are planned alongside continuous provision (Discovery Time) inside the classroom and in outdoor areas.

Assessment

The Statutory Framework calls for two levels of assessment in the EYFS. Formative assessments involve noticing what the children do and say through observations. The teachers will assess and decide 'what next' in terms of planning, organisation, resources, the learning environment and future opportunities.

Staff ensure that they do not take prolonged breaks from working or playing alongside the children to write observations. Any significant notes or learning stories will be annotated to the children's learning in folders. In addition, staff document children's learning experiences using Seesaw, enabling them to capture and share their progress with their families.

Summative assessments take place at specific points in the year to provide an overall picture of each child's development. These include baseline assessments, periodic reviews of progress such as end of half term phonic assessments, termly tracking of progress on tracker grids during Pupil Progress meetings and the EYFS Profile at the end of the reception year. Summative assessments are informed by a wide range of formative observations and interactions, ensuring that the teachers build an accurate, holistic understanding of each child's learning and development.

The level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS is defined by the **Early Learning Goals (ELGs)**. The ELGs support teachers to make a holistic, best-fit judgment about a child's development in readiness for Year 1. Teachers base these judgments using a range of

evidence but mainly we draw upon our extensive knowledge of each child. Teachers use the EYFS exemplification videos and guidance to support judgements about the ELGs.

Below are the 17 ELG's across each area of learning and development:

Communication and Language

- Listening, Attention and Understanding
- Speaking

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Self-Regulation
- Managing Self
- Building Relationships

Physical Development

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills

Literacy

- Comprehension
- Word Reading
- Writing

Mathematics

- Number
- Numerical Patterns

Understanding the World

- Past and Present
- People, Culture and Communities
- The Natural World

Expressive Arts and Design

- Creating with Materials
- Being Imaginative and Expressive

In October and March, the teachers will meet with parents and carers to discuss their child's progress, including their social and emotional development, friendships, and how they have settled into school life. We will also share information about your child's dispositions and attitudes in class, helping you gain a clear picture of how they are approaching learning.

At the end of the academic year, your child's progress and achievements will be reported to parents in a written report. This will include a short commentary on each area of learning and development, as well as reflections on your child's social interactions, engagement in class, and overall wellbeing at school. We want to celebrate your child's successes and provide valuable information to support their smooth transition into Year 1

Induction – The Transition into School

At St. John's VA C of E First School the transition begins from the offer day, through to September. In May, parents/carers receive a welcome letter with information about our transition into school and dates for transition events. In early June, parents and carers are invited to an evening Welcome Meeting

in the school hall to meet the reception teachers and support staff, head teacher and SENDCO, where important information is shared about the EYFS at St. John's and day to day routines of school life.

As part of our induction programme, we offer a range of activities designed to welcome new children and families and to strengthen relationships within our school community. These include:

- a Teddy Bear's Picnic – an informal gathering for new children and families to meet, chat and enjoy spending time together in our school garden.
- Pre-school and Nursery Visits – staff spend time with children in their familiar early-years settings to support a smooth and confident transition. Talking to a child's key worker can provide invaluable information.
- Stay-and-Play Session – an opportunity for children to explore their new classroom environment and interact with their teachers and support staff alongside their parents and/or carers.
- A visit to the reception classroom on Frome Transfer Day – a second opportunity for children to play in their new classroom with their teachers and support staff and experience being dropped off and collected by their parents and/or carers for a short time.
- A St. John's bookbag from our PFSA 'Friends of St. John's' to take home over the summer ready to bring on their first day in September. There will be a little paper 'All About Me' bag inside the bookbag for children to fill with special objects to share and talk about during their first week of school. There will also be a photo book of our classroom and outdoor areas for children to share with families and friends over the summer holiday.
- A school handbook to share clear information about school life and routines with new families.
- Access to Free Second-Hand Uniform – available to help families prepare for September and reduce financial pressure.
- Additional Transitional Visits for children with SEND – personalised sessions arranged to ensure children with additional needs feel secure, supported and ready for their start at school.
- Multi-professional School Entry Plan meetings to support children with additional needs.

Induction in the first half term

- Giving parents/carers the option of their child attending school part-time or full-time for the first three weeks. The part-time option enables children to attend during the mornings and go home before lunch for the first two weeks and then extending this to staying for lunch during the third week.
- EYFS curriculum meeting and newsletter for parents and/or carers
- Read Write Inc Phonics meeting for parents and/or carers
- Sharing settling in and learning activities on Seesaw. Opportunities for parents and/or carers to share photos and videos of children's interests at home.

Transition from Reception to Year 1

Our aim is to establish a smooth and successful transition from the Early Years Foundation stage setting to year 1. This is facilitated by:

- Strong communication, professional dialogue and collaboration between EYFS and Year 1 staff, ensuring shared understanding of each child's learning journey, progress, and needs.

- Opportunities for children to visit the Year 1 classroom, meet new adults, and become familiar with routines and expectations.
- A year 1 curriculum meeting Information sharing with parents and carers, helping them understand changes in curriculum, routines, and ways to support learning at home.
- Use of baseline assessments and EYFS learning profiles to inform planning and ensure continuity of learning.
- A gradual increase in structure, blending play-based approaches with early introduction to Year 1 learning styles.
- Consistent routines across EYFS and Year 1 where appropriate, supporting children's sense of security.
- Carefully planned transition activities, such as story times, classroom visits to celebrate achievements and spending the day in the year 1 classroom on Frome Transfer Day.
- Additional Transitional Visits and additional meeting between parents and/or carers and reception and year 1 teachers for children with SEND or additional needs.
- A focus on emotional wellbeing, ensuring children feel confident, secure, and ready for new challenges.
- Ongoing monitoring and review of transition practices to ensure they are effective and responsive to children's needs.

Role of the Foundation Stage Teachers

Under the guidance of the Head Teacher, the Foundation Stage Teachers are responsible for:

- Organising and delivering the EYFS curriculum, ensuring clear progression and development across all areas of learning.
- Monitoring planning and the quality of curriculum delivery to maintain high standards of teaching and learning.
- Setting targets and tracking pupil progress termly, with particular attention to children from groups (e.g., Pupil Premium, EAL).
- Using formative and summative assessments to inform and complete the final EYFS Profile.
- Submitting accurate and timely profile data to the Local Authority.
- Engaging in ongoing professional development to remain informed about current practice and developments in Early Years education.
- Participating in annual moderation, supported by the LA and with school colleagues.
- Maintaining strong and effective communication with parents and carers to support children's learning and development.

Safeguarding

All staff complete annual safeguarding training and are regularly updated on new legislation and guidance. Ensuring that every child in our school is safe and feels safe is central to our practice. We teach children about behaviour expectations so they can understand their purpose. We also offer choices to help develop decision-making skills and encourage independence. While we believe that children should be able to take appropriate risks, we help them learn how to recognise and avoid potential hazards. Our aim is to protect both the physical and emotional well-being of every child. In addition, the EYFS Leader/ class teacher and all support staff in the EYFS hold a paediatric first aid certificate, which is renewed every three years.