



## St John's Primary Academy Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, all children join us at the age of four to complete the EYFS in the reception year.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within the early years.

- Every child is an **Unique Child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured
- Children learn to be strong through **Positive Relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **Enabling Environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- Children **Learn** and **Develop** in different ways and at different rates

### A 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, 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 children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### Positive Relationships

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

### Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

### The Learning Environment

In Reception we organise the environment to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and

rest. The environment is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and located equipment and resources independently.

### **Our Philosophy**

We believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to reach their full potential. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. In the Foundation Stage children learn best through play based activities and first hand experiences. Each child is unique and is valued as an individual. We aim to provide a secure foundation through learning and development opportunities based around the needs of each individual child.

### **Aims**

- To provide a happy, caring, safe and secure environment for learning, which meets the individual needs and interests of the children.
- To develop warm and secure relationships between children and adults.
- To provide a high quality curriculum in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage document.
- For the children to become aware of moral and social values.
- To encourage active learning through first hand experiences both in indoor and outdoor play, and through both verbal and non-verbal communication.
- To encourage children to become self-motivated and independent learners with a positive attitude to learning and self-discipline.
- To value the cultural diversity within our school and community.
- To foster positive home school links and share a common sense of purpose with parents.

### **Principles in Practice**

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on The EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observations and assessment.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult initiated and child- initiated supported by the adult.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out.

## **Foundation Stage Curriculum**

We plan our curriculum based on our observations of children's learning, needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and for some children to exceed the early learning goals.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three areas are the Prime Areas:

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

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

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

## **Teaching and Learning**

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, the adults in the setting interact to stretch and challenge children further.

The children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which the children explore, think creatively and are active both inside and out. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

As a team, we plan using the EYFS based around a series of topics which offers experiences in all seven areas of the curriculum. These plans then inform our short term weekly planning alongside our observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or to develop the children's interests.

Children have whole groups and small group times, which focus on different aspects of the EYFS alongside times for daily 'Letter and Sounds' activities and number time.

### **The Learning Environment**

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas: role play, book corner, mark making, computer area, creative area, malleable area, construction, small world. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

### **Observation and Assessment**

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess the children's learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways these include written observations, photographs, children's work and pupil voice. The children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey and using our online journal Tapestry. These are shared with parents at parents evening and during our parent time sessions. Our online learning journal notifies parents of recent observations and allows them to enter their own comments.

As a school we use DCPRO to track and record the children's progress and meet termly to discuss the children's progress and attainment with senior leadership. An analysis of the data is undertaken to identify any areas of development, which are then used to inform our future planning and our environment and to identify children's next steps.

In the summer term the children are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals. For each Early Learning Goal, the teachers must judge whether a child is:

- meeting the level of development expected at the end of the reception year (expected)

- exceeding this level (exceeding)
- not yet reaching this level (emerging)

### **Characteristics of Learning**

The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner.

### **Playing and exploring - engagement**

'Finding out and exploring' is concerned with the child's open-ended hands-on experiences which result from innate curiosity. These experiences provide raw sensory material from which the child builds concepts, tests ideas and finds out. 'Using what they know in their play' describes how children use play to bring together their current understandings, combining, refining and exploring their ideas in imaginative ways. Representing experiences through imaginative play supports the development of narrative thought, the ability to see from other perspectives, and symbolic thinking.

Being willing to have a go' refers to the child:

- finding an interest
- initiating activities
- seeking challenge
- having a 'can do' attitude
- being willing to take a risk in new experiences
- developing the view that failures are opportunities to learn

### **Active learning - motivation**

'Being involved and concentrating' describes the intensity of attention that arises from children engaged in following a line of interest in their activities.

'Keeping on trying' refers to:

- the importance of persistence even in the face of challenge or difficulties
- an element of purposeful control which supports resilience

'Enjoying achieving what they set out to do' builds on the intrinsic motivation which supports long-term success. It refers to the reward of meeting one's own goals, rather than relying on the approval of others.

### **Creating and thinking critically**

'Having their own ideas' covers the critical area of creativity - generating new ideas and approaches in all areas of endeavour. Being inventive allows children to find new problems as they seek challenge, and to explore ways of solving these.

'Using what they already know to learn new things' refers to the way children use narrative and scientific modes of thought to:

- develop and link concepts
- find meaning in sequence, cause and effect
- find meaning in the intentions of others

Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways' involves children in:

- approaching goal-directed activity in organised ways
- making choices and decisions about how to approach tasks
- planning and monitoring what to do and being able to change strategies

### **Behaviour**

Children in reception receive praise, stickers, team points and have golden time for doing the right thing and completing good work. We also follow the whole school behaviour policy. Children start each day on the sunshine. If the children follow the school expectations, do the right thing, complete class challenges are kind or helpful then they can move on to the rainbow or the pot of gold. When the children move to the rainbow they will receive a sticker and if they move to the pot of gold they will receive a certificate and a prize.

If children are unable to follow the school expectations they will be put on to the warning cloud and will miss 5 minutes of golden time for that day. If the behaviour continues the children will be moved to the storm cloud and miss all of their golden time for that day. Parents will be informed.

It may be necessary in some situations to implement different strategies such as

reward charts to help children with their behaviour.

### **Parents as Partners and the wider community**

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and encourage parents to participate in their children's learning in a variety of ways.

We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school.
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher prior to starting school during a number of "Induction Sessions".
- Weekly information sheets are sent home informing parents about what their child has been learning.
- Weekly family learning activities.
- Tapestry online learning journal.
- Encourage parents to talk to their child's teacher about any concerns they may have.
- The use of 'tree of celebration' leaves to share the children's achievements at home.
- Arrange a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents. For example, Parent Time sessions, Nativity and learning workshops and Graduation.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/guardians can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- Inviting parents/guardians to help in the reception class and to accompany children on school visits.
- Encouraging parents/guardians to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary.
- There are three formal meetings per year (Autumn, Spring and Summer term) at which time the teacher and parent discuss the child's progress and development.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on school outings and inviting members of the community into our setting

## **Our Induction Process**

During the summer term, children who will be starting school in September make more formal visits to the reception class as part of the induction process.

A parents meeting is held by Foundation Stage Leader and Reception staff in the summer and Autumn Term to introduce parents/guardians to the school and reception procedures. Through this meeting the school's expectations and routines are communicated. The induction process and reception curriculum are also introduced.

Parents/guardians have the opportunity to meet the class teacher and to visit the reception classroom. Parents/guardians are given a pack which outlines the reception curriculum and school routines, along with other necessary documentation.

During the summer term, all prospective children are invited to visit the school for a number of sessions to allow them to become familiar with the environment and also the staff. These include the Reception fun day, stay and play sessions, playground pals and a morning visit.

Transfer records from pre-school settings inform reception practitioners about the new intake. If it is required, visits to other local pre-school settings are made in order to aid the induction process further.

During the induction period in September, children are split into two groups. They begin part-time sessions for 4 days before starting full-time on the first full week.

This allows:

- Children to adjust and feel secure in their new environment.
- The practitioners to get to know the children individually and establish good relationships.
- The reception teacher to carry out a baseline assessment.

## **Reception to Year 1 Transition**

Reception and Year 1 teachers have worked together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

At St John's Primary Academy

- Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the reception year.
- Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer term, encouraging less dependence on adult support.



- Reception children meet year 1 teachers during worship and other whole school activities during the reception year.
- EYFS Profile and characteristics of learning are passed on to year 1 teachers and discussed.
- Reception and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July.
- Reception children visit their new Year 1 class and teacher for several short sessions in July and a morning visit.
- Year 1 classrooms include learning areas similar to the reception classrooms: e.g. role-play, writing table for the first half term.

### **Inclusion**

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at St John's School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. We believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our 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. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational 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 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.

## **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."

At St John's Primary Academy we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2008. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of 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 all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

This policy was drawn up by Rachael Trubshaw.

It was presented to and approved by the Local Academy Committee on 21 March 2018.

To be reviewed in March 2020.